

WOMEN
Professing
GODLINESS



*Outline Studies on
Godly Women
and Their Ministry*

E.L. MOORE

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Preface

The studies presented herein represent a summary of teaching ministry which the author has given in several Gospel Halls located in the United States and Canada, as well as in South America. The ministry was presented in an effort to help both brethren and sisters to understand more fully the Divine purposes behind the doctrines unfolded, and to encourage godly sisters to continue walking in a plain path in obedience to their Lord and Master.

We recognize that certain subjects regarding women and their outward appearance and role or conduct might tend to foster controversy. Paul already forewarned that the subjection and conduct of women in the congregation would be controversial themes (see I Corinthians 11:16 and 14:37-38). Nevertheless, it is our conviction that there is need to emphasize these truths within the framework of the Divine plan in the Scriptures. We have endeavored to present the truth "in love" (Eph. 4:15), not going beyond what is clearly set forth in the Word of God, nor retreating either.

These studies have been of special personal benefit to the author, producing a deeper appreciation of the Divine plan and purposes, particularly with respect to the truth of headship. The author is also aware that a detailed examination of these subjects signifies a greater responsibility placed upon him and his own household. We have been made more aware of our own shortcomings, and surely there is room for improvement, as by God's grace we "press toward the mark" (Phil. 3:14). It is our prayer that a deeper understanding and appreciation of the truths involved will also produce a greater desire for obedience on the part of each reader. Greater enlightenment represents greater responsibility to the Lord, since "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48).

Expressions of grateful appreciation are due to several believers who have participated in the preparation of this work. We are grateful in a special way to brother A.J. Higgins, M.D., of Haddon Heights, New Jersey, for carefully reviewing the manuscript and submitting very helpful comments and suggestions which have been incorporated. In addition, the forward which he has prepared has been a source of encouragement to us. As well, we wish to express thanks to brother Don Draper of Pennsauken, New Jersey, for designing the cover. Our appreciated brother Matthew Brescia of East Hartford, Connecticut has again given generously of his time and means to publish this work.

Finally, I am indebted to my dear wife and life partner, for her encouragement and participation, from start to finish, in the layout and typing of numerous revisions, critical review of the material, and coordination of the publication effort during my absences due to travels in the work of the Lord.

Ernest L. Moore

Foreword

Those who have had the opportunity of sitting under the ministry of our brother Ernest Moore have become accustomed to a thorough, painstaking review of whatever the Word of God has to say about a subject. The same is true of that which follows in the pages of this book.

Our brother has provided us with a very thorough and detailed study of the women in the Bible. From the lives and experiences of these women he has extracted valuable principles and lessons which are of importance to all believers and assemblies at this critical time in testimony.

The approach which our brother Moore has used is a thorough investigation of the Word of God coupled with a well-organized presentation. In areas where differences of opinion exist, he has presented both views in a fair and unbiased manner, while not hesitating to commit himself on his own view of Scripture. Various sections are worthy of mention. The first chapter which links various women together on the basis of different factors will prove thought-provoking and a field for further personal study. The chapters dealing with the Shunamite woman (Ch. 4) and the place of sisters in the assembly (Chs. 3 & 6) are worthy of reading by all.

Every writing seeks to find a niche and meet a need amongst its readers. This volume will serve many valuable functions for its readers. It should have a place in the general instruction of all the people of God relative to the important subject of women. It will serve as a reference for teachers of the Word of God. It will prove highly valuable to Sunday School teachers looking for fresh ways of introducing material and collating lives of Bible personages.

The work before you, expounding the Word of God and its teaching on women, should exercise all sisters as to their place before God, and enlighten us all as to the valuable role which God has assigned to our sisters. Every writing is sent out by the author with the fervent prayer that it will not only find a place in the library of believers, but in the lives of saints as well. This volume, if prayerfully read, should accomplish that goal.

March 1989

A.J. Higgins, M.D.

Introduction

"Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men" (Psalm 12:1). This cry of alarm from the pen of the Psalmist David should cause us to reflect upon the dearth of godly, faithful men in this present corrupt world. If we are aroused to lament the lack of godly men, what about godly women? The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes, in his musings on a human level, expressed the following conclusion: "One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found" (Eccl. 7:28). We would like to take up that challenge in this book, and demonstrate that, both in the Scriptures and in this world of the late 20th century, there are written and living examples of godly, faithful women, all of whom are worthy to be imitated.

This book has been prepared for the purpose of encouraging devoted sisters, surrounded by the social pressures and norms of society, to continue in obedience to their Lord and Master, having been reassured in their convictions and confidence in His Word. Their conduct and ministry are set forth from both doctrinal and practical standpoints. In particular, certain principles are developed to help orient them in three spheres of activity and service; namely, in the assembly, in the home and in the world.

We wish to add a suggestion for any readers whose study time might be limited. The first chapter consists principally of compiled lists of outstanding women of the Bible, arranged according to their parallel circumstances and occupations in life. This material should be useful for reference study, However, the analysis of the doctrines and practice of the truths begins essentially in Chapter Two. Therefore the continuity of the study will not be adversely affected by passing over Chapter One.

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Chapter One

GENERAL SURVEY OF BIBLE WOMEN

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

Luke 1:46-48

The introductory verses above represent the most sublime statements that a human being could express, in anticipation of the manifestation of God in human form. Mary's willing acceptance of the Divine plan for her life, and humble submission to whatever the Word of the Lord required, opened the way for the Spirit of God to work in and through her in a marvelous way. Like Mary, godly women of today might be called blessed by this and future generations.

In this chapter a foundation is laid for the succeeding chapters of this book. Women of the Old Testament and New Testament are examined here in a general sense, under different headings, with the object of acquainting the reader with the vast number of Biblical examples at hand for personal meditation and application. Although the majority of these women are not mentioned in succeeding chapters, they are summarized here as reference material for further doctrinal and practical studies. The themes in this chapter are highlighted by compiled lists of women in somewhat parallel circumstances, chosen from a number of books of the Bible.

We will begin the study by considering certain distinguished women of the Old Testament.

I. Certain Distinguished Women of the Old Testament

Although the Old Testament abounds with names of men, including the genealogies which frequently record only the males, the Spirit of God has placed certain women at critical points in history.

In some re-spects, those women seem to outshine many men who were living at the same time. They were honourable women (Psa. 45:9), not necessarily great by men's standards, but godly by Divine standards.

The following list includes ten distinguished Old Testament women, all of whom were married, with one exception (Miriam), and some of whom were mothers. Each of the women listed below manifested noble ways and spoke noble words in the midst of a crisis. As indicated, there was a national crisis and a personal crisis, generally parallel in point of time, which each one experienced. Also, certain notable words spoken by each woman are included. The meaning of each name is given in parenthesis.

Ten Distinguished Old Testament Women

1. Sarah (princess)

Certain crises in her life:

National - Divine promises must be fulfilled in her seed, despite the human impossibilities.

Personal - Despising by her handmaid Hagar.

Notable words:

"Cast out this bondwoman and her son...." (Gen. 21:10, Gal. 4:30) "Sara obeyed Abraham calling him lord" (I Peter 3:6).

2. Miriam (bitter, obstinacy, rebellion)

Certain crises in her life:

National - Demonic plan to eliminate all Hebrew males, and later to enslave all the people.

Personal - Doubts regarding Moses' calling (Num. 12:1-2).

Notable words:

"Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously" (Ex. 15:21).

Note: For a summary of the life of Miriam see Chapter Three, Section IX.

3. Rahab (pride, arrogance)

Certain crises in her life:

National - Destruction of the city of Jericho.

Personal - Deliverance of her own family from death (Josh. 2:13).

Notable words:

"I know that the Lord hath given you the land.... The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:9,11).

4. Deborah (a bee, eloquent)

Certain crises in her life:

National - Determination to end the oppression by the Canaanites.

Personal - Deliverance of Israel would not be by the hand of a man (Judg. 4:9).

Notable words:

A number of notable phrases spoken by Deborah are recorded in Judges 4. However, her most outstanding composition is her song, in Judges 5. There are a number of glorious statements, including a personal reference, "I Deborah arose, I arose a mother in Israel" (v. 7), and a prophetic phrase, "Lead thy captivity captive" (v.12), which is similar to Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8.

Note: For a study on Deborah see Chapter 5, Section IV.)

5. Naomi (pleasantness)

Certain crises in her life:

National - Dearth in the land of Judea.

Personal - Death of her husband and two sons, and her resulting decision to return to Bethlehem.

Notable words:

"I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty...the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me" (Ruth 1:21,22).

6. Ruth (friendship, beauty)

Certain crises in her life:

National - The Davidic line must be introduced (Ruth 4:17).

Personal - Departure from her idolatrous former life.

Notable words:

"Whither thou goest, I will go.... if ought but death part thee and me" (Ruth 1:16,17).
"Why have I found grace in thine eyes...."
(Ruth 2:10).

7. Unnamed widow of Zarephath, meaning "smelting place", who ministered to the prophet Elijah - I Kings 17:9-24, Luke 4:25-26

Certain crises in her life:

National - Drought conditions due to the wicked corruption in Israel.

Personal- Destitute situation of the widow and her son.

Notable words:

"I know that thou (Elijah) art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth" (I Kings 17:24).

8. Unnamed great woman of Shunem, meaning "their sleep", in the days of Elisha the prophet - II Kings 4

Certain crises in her life:

National - Degenerate state of Israel, after the reigns of Ahab and his son Ahaziah.

Personal - Deception by the prophet feared, and later the death of her only child.

Notable words:

"Behold now I perceive that this is an holy man of God" (II Kings 4:9). "I dwell among mine own people" (II Kings 4:13).

Note: For an extensive study on the Shunamite woman see Chapter 4, Section VI.

9. Abigail (father of delight)

Certain crises in her life:

National - Determination of King Saul to slay David.

Personal - Danger to her and her household caused by evil attitudes and words of her husband Nabal.

Notable words:

"The Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house.—The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life" (I Sam. 25:28,29).

10. Esther (star; the goddess Ishtar)

Certain crises in her life:

National - Decree of annihilation of Jews by the wicked Haman.

Personal - Discern a way to gain the favour of the all-powerful monarch.

Notable words:

"So will I go in unto the king ... and if I perish, I perish" (Esth. 4:16).

In the midst of personal difficulties and even crises in her own life, perhaps the reader can identify with one or another of these women. The notable words spoken by each woman should inspire confidence in the Lord and infuse new spiritual strength to prevail.

Although almost all the women listed above were married at one time or another in their life, only some of them were mothers. Therefore we consider it important to set forth a similar list of noteworthy mothers of the Old Testament, engaged in that vocation and calling in life for which women are specially fitted and endowed by the Creator, to bear children and create a home for them. As well, there follows a corresponding list of New Testament mothers in the study below.

II. Noteworthy Mothers of the Bible

The following study consists principally of lists of Biblical mothers who are worthy

of mention. It appears evident that there are more outstanding examples of mothers in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. This is reflected in the number of mothers we have chosen for the two lists; namely, Ten O.T. Mothers and Four N.T. Mothers.

The Old Testament list does not include certain mothers, such as the mother of Shem, Ham and Japheth. Nothing direct is known about her, although much could be inferred through considering her husband, Noah. Only one woman, Sarah, figures in both sections I and II of this chapter. The decision to include her again was influenced by the fact that she figures so prominently in the New Testament, in Romans 4:19 and 9:9, Galatians 4:22-33, Hebrews 11:11 and I Peter 3:6.

Each entry below includes the names of the husband and children, and a brief review of some notable events associated with her life as a mother. Certain outstanding words relating to her role as wife and mother are also included. The meaning of the name of each mother appears in parenthesis.

Outstanding Old Testament Mothers

1. Eve (life-giver), wife of Adam and mother of Cain, Abel and Seth

Her renown - Called "the mother of all living", Eve had neither mother nor mid-wife to assist her in the birth of her children. Nor could she seek advice from others in raising her children. Therefore, she must trust exclusively in the Lord. Apparently she tried to re-establish favour with the Lord after the pronouncement of the curse, as evidenced in the names she gave to her sons. What a crushing humiliation she must have experienced after the tragic murder of Abel,

considering the significance of the name Cain (Gen. 4:1). If she hadn't previously realized the consequences of her disobedience in the Garden of Eden, she must now face up to the conscious realization of having passed on a fallen, sinful nature to each new creature. However, her only hope lay in the spoken promises of the Lord. The name Seth means "appointed", revealing that she believed that God would execute His curse placed upon the serpent (Gen. 3:15) through the seed of that son.

Her words - On four occasions Eve spoke (Gen. 3:2-3,13; 4:1,25), a total of 72 words in English. By way of comparison, the sum of Adam's recorded phrases is 61 words (Gen. 2:23, 3:10, 3:12). This does not include his inferred speech in Genesis 2:19-20 and 3:20.

2. Sarah (princess), wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac

Her renown - Remarkable even in her earlier years, Sarah had abandoned a settled life of ease and luxury in Ur, the commercial and cultural center of the Middle East, to follow her husband. He knew not where he was going (Heb. 11:8), but was acting in faith upon a vision received from the Lord while still in Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2,3). Later, at age 65, she left Haran to journey again, this time in a southwesterly direction, to the land of Canaan, in obedience to her husband and in confidence that the Lord would guide and guard them. A famine drove them temporarily further southwest to Egypt, but shortly thereafter they realized their error and returned to the land of promise. Nevertheless, the brief exposure to Egypt's idolatrous, worldly atmosphere left certain lasting imprints. During their brief stay the Egyptians noticed her exceptional beauty, even in middle age. Her husband, fearing for

his life but apparently less concerned about her chastity, encouraged Sarah to lie. Also, their nephew Lot developed a covetous attitude toward material things which eventually led to his downfall and multiple losses. However, the greatest and most lasting impact came about through that Egyptian slave girl Hagar, particularly through the son that she bore to Abraham.

Nevertheless, God's promises are sure and secure, and Sarah's faith must be combined with patience, being fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was able also to perform (Rom. 4:21). Just as she and her husband had demonstrated confidence in the Lord years earlier when they knew not where to journey, now they must place implicit faith in Him when they knew not how to overcome the problems of advanced age and the barren womb (Rom. 4:19). She personally appropriated the Divine promises, esteeming God to be true and faithful to His Word (Heb. 11:11), although inwardly laughing at the ridiculous thought of conceiving at 89 years of age. Receiving strength to conceive, in due time Sarah gave birth to her only child, Isaac. We can imagine her shock and grief a number of years later, upon learning of the Lord's request to Abraham, and the burning question which arose -- Why must he offer the beloved son of promise? Throughout most of her 127 years, during which she experienced several major crises, Sarah lived a full life of faith in partnership with her husband, spending well over 62 years as a faithful, trusting wife including the latter 37 years as a fulfilled mother.

In the New Testament Abraham is called "the father of all them that believe" (Rom.4: 11), and those who have believed by faith are "the children of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). In like manner, Sarah is recognized as the spiritual

mother of believing women who are living in willing subjection to the Word of God. They are called "daughters" of Sarah (I Pet. 3:6).

Her words - "Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing" (Gen. 16:2). "God hath made me to laugh I have borne him a son in his old age" (Gen. 21:6,7). "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord" (I Pet. 3:6).

3. Rebekah ("fettering, by beauty"; "to clog," by tying up the fetlock, a looped cord for tying young animals), wife of Isaac and mother of Jacob and Esau

Her renown - Never again would she experience an evening like that one, beginning with the uneventful journey to the well with her pitcher, and ending with the hasty preparations to journey westward early the next morning, never to return. It was hardly possible to comprehend those moments at the well, the intriguing conversation with the stranger and the indescribable reward for watering his camels. But then, Rebekah was an unusual maiden, and the significance of each event far transcends earthly scenes. Our first glimpse of her, so beautiful and pure in her appearance, actions and attitude, reveals a number of outstanding qualities -friendly and attentive, humble and respectful, willing to serve and hospitable. In the midst of all the eye and ear-dazzling events at the well and in the home was her growing conviction that the Lord was leading, causing her to reply confidently without hesitation, "I will go" (Gen. 24:58).

Truly her experience was unique, in order to reveal precious spiritual truths. Her betrothal and journey across the desert, under the guidance of the unnamed servant, present beautiful scenes and a preview of

spiritual events which are linked with the church, the bride of the Lamb. Of practical importance as well, they suggest lessons regarding engagement and marriage upon earth.

However, subsequent events in the married life of Isaac and Rebekah appear to reflect unfavourable changes in their spiritual outlook. No children were born to them during the first nineteen years of marriage. Finally, Isaac entreated the Lord, and after conceiving, Rebekah inquired of the Lord (Gen. 25:21 - 23). These separate individual inquiries before the Lord cause us to wonder if perhaps they were already experiencing a distance and lack of communication the one with the other. The marital strain became even greater as they showed obvious partiality toward their twin sons. Isaac, formerly accustomed to meditating in the field in single days (Gen. 24:63), had developed a carnal appetite for venison over the years, and began to link his love for Esau with his son's hunting and cooking skills. Rebekah, determined to see the special patriarchal blessing bestowed upon her favoured son Jacob, schemed rather than wait patiently upon the Lord to fulfill His promises, in His time. Her lack of confidence in the Word of the Lord caused her to take matters into her own hands. Her lack of communication with her husband caused her to act independently, deceiving him. Perhaps she didn't live up to the description of the virtuous wife, "She will do him good and not evil...." (Prov. 31:12). While we cannot condone Rebekah's pre-meditated effort to deceive her husband, we must remember that Esau had a longstanding reputation for despising spiritual values.

It is evident that Rebekah died without seeing her beloved son again. She last appears in the Old Testament in Genesis 49:31,

then reappears in the New Testament in Romans 9:10. In the last reference to her husband and sons (Heb. 11:20), blessing is set forth concerning things to come.

Her words - "I will go" (Gen. 24:58). "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice" (Gen. 27:8,43).

4. Leah (weary), the first wife of Jacob and mother of seven children: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah

Her renown - The tender-eyed oldest daughter of Laban, she was given in marriage to Jacob in a deceptive arrangement by her father. Continually seeking the affection of a husband who didn't love her, she was drawn in her sorrow to the only true God, in contrast to her younger sister Rachel, who retained her idols. Her confidence was in God, and He blessed her in giving her seven children. However, she did not glory in a fruitful womb, but remained humble despite her sister's unconcealed envy. She was honoured in death, since by Jacob's personal charge to his sons he was buried beside her (Gen. 49:29-31). It is important to consider the spiritual meaning of the names she gave to her sons, in Genesis 29 and 30. The third and fourth sons, Levi and Judah, respectively, were the progenitors of the lawgiver of Israel, Moses, and the King of the Jews, our Lord Jesus Christ. Apart from 33 references in Genesis, she is also mentioned **in** Ruth 4:11.

Her words - "Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction", "Now will I praise the Lord" (Gen. 29:32,35). "Happy am I", "God hath endowed me with a good dowry" (Gen. 30:13,20).

5. Rachel (ewe), the promised wife of Jacob, and mother of Joseph and Benjamin

Her renown - The beautiful, greatly-loved wife of Jacob for perhaps about 27 years, she was petulant and demanding. Although "well favoured" in physical appearance, she was disappointing and spiritually barren on the inside, always trying to manipulate circumstances to her own advantage. She tried to govern her husband's affection, and with a competitive dominance even bargained for the time that he would spend with his first wife Leah. Self-centered and jealous of the Lord's manifold blessing upon her sister, she demanded children of Jacob (Gen. 30:1) and eventually died upon the birth of her second son. Besides the numerous references to Rachel in Genesis, there are three additional references, as follows: Ruth 4:11 - her house, I Samuel 10:2 - her sepulchre, and Matthew 2:18 - her weeping descendants.

Her words - "Give me children, or else I die" (Gen. 30:1). "God hath taken away my reproach....The Lord shall add to me another son" (Gen. 30:23,24).

"Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do" (Gen. 31:16). "She called his name Benoni, meaning the son of my sorrow" (Gen. 35:18).

6. Asenath ("she belongs to the goddess Neit", a pagan deity), wife of Joseph and mother of Ephraim and Manasseh

Her renown - Little is known about her, since there are only three brief Biblical references (Gen. 41:45,50; 46:20). However, we may conclude that she was raised in On, the great center of Egyptian sun-worship. Despite her idolatrous past, she apparently believed in the only and true God, concurring with her husband Joseph in giving the sons significant Hebrew names. Manasseh means

"causing to forget" and Ephraim means "doubly fruitful".

7. Jochebed (Jehovah is glorious), wife of Amram and mother of Miriam, Aaron and Moses

Her renown - She and her husband, an unusual couple of the tribe of Levi, were the parents of three outstanding children, each of whom occupied a strategic position in the leadership of the children of Israel in their exodus from Egypt and subsequent desert pilgrimage. Both of them demonstrated a living faith which dared to defy the demonic decrees of the tyrannical Pharaoh (Ex. 2:2,3 - Note that "she" occurs 5 times. See also Heb. 11:23.)

Jochebed is best remembered for her unique plan to save the life of her youngest child, later to become Israel's lawgiver, in a moment of national crisis when her people were being despised and downtrodden by the Egyptians. With maternal love and spiritual concern she prepared the ark of bulrushes. Then, placing the child within and wisely appointing her daughter to watch over him from a discreet distance, she committed him into the Lord's all-sufficient hands. Shortly after, favoured by Miriam's wise, intelligent response after the princess had discovered the baby, Jochebed received legal custody of her child, enjoying full liberty to raise him without the threat of death. Ironically, she received a royal stipend to care for the child, indirectly appointed by the very Pharaoh who had decreed death for the child. Later she fulfilled her word in returning her child to Pharaoh's daughter, who promptly named him Moses (Ex. 2:10). We can be certain that Jochebed used those few short years at home to inculcate a knowledge of the living God into the mind of her child,

before surrendering him to the palace in Egypt and the liberal education he would receive as a prince.

8. Wife of Manoah (meaning "rest") and mother of Samson (meaning "distinguished, strong")

Her renown - This unnamed woman, whose husband was of the tribe of Dan, suddenly appears prominently on the horizon of that sad book called Judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25). She was the first of three mothers who raised their sons strictly, as Nazarites.

(The sons' names are: Samson the judge, Samuel the prophet, and John Baptist the forerunner.) Unfortunately, her son did not walk in the ways of the Lord in his adult life.

Twice the angelic messenger appeared to her, and she immediately informed her husband Manoah. Later, her response to her husband's fearful exclamation reveals her depth of intelligent reasoning in a three-fold manner, as follows: she recognized the Lord's acceptance of their offerings, she remembered His revelation to them, and she respected the word of the Lord through His angel (See Judges 13:21-23).

Her husband had asked the angelic messenger, "How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?" (Judg. 13:12). It is evident that they raised their son in accordance with the angel's original instructions (Judg. 13:5), as Samson later confessed (Judg. 16:17). Furthermore, they expressed their disagreement with Samson's poor choice of a wife, and apparently the mother did not accompany her husband to the betrothal (Judg. 14:3,10). However, both parents did accompany the son to Timnath (Judg.14:5, name

meaning - "image") which seemed to be the launching point in Samson's downward plunge with strange women, which eventually led to his moral and physical downfall.

Her words - "A man of God came unto me..." (Judg. 13:6). "If the Lord were pleased..." (Judg. 13:23). "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren..." (Judg. 14:3).

9. Hannah (gracious, gratuitous gift), wife of Elkanah and mother of Samuel

Her renown - In the midst of a national crisis (the degenerate worship in Israel due to a priestly scandal), as well as a personal crisis (her distressed condition due to oppression by a rival), this remarkable woman diligently prayed and faithfully promised the Lord. Overwhelmed by sadness and deeply afflicted and taunted by her jealous rival Peninnah, she turned to the Lord with a humble and broken heart.

Respectful in her reply to the high priest, she nevertheless was not intimidated by him. After pouring out her petition and vow she returned home, confident in the Lord and reassured by the high priest. In due time she fulfilled her promise in returning Samuel to the Lord, and composed a magnificent prayer of rejoicing. In her yearly visits to the temple in Shiloh she manifested her maternal care and interest, bringing him a new coat. The sequel to the story reveals that she received much more in return, for the Lord richly blessed her with five additional children. In summary, there are several noteworthy points which reveal the sterling character of this remarkable woman: her prayers, her promise and its fulfillment, and her continued concern for the child.

Her words - include two remarkable prayers, found in I Sam. 1:11 and 2:1-10. As well, she said, "The Lord hath given me my petition.... Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord..." (I Sam. 1:27,28).

10. Bathsheba (daughter of the oath), wife of David and mother of Solomon. She was the daughter of Eliam (II Sam. 11:3). Perhaps he was the same Eliam, numbered among David's mighty men, who was a son of Ahithophel, counsellor to David (II Sam. 23:34, 15:12)

Her renown - The story of this strikingly beautiful woman begins rather negatively, in II Samuel 11. The sparse details concerning her exposing her body, then responding to David's carnal desires without resisting, leave many questions unanswered and cast a shadow upon her character. Although she was unfaithful to her first husband, we can safely conclude that she was faithful to David the king. Undoubtedly she shared with David certain life-long guilt feelings and grief over the loss of her first child. However, upon confession of their sin they could both claim the forgiveness which the Lord offered in grace. Shortly after, she was favored with another son, Solomon, who became Israel's wisest and richest king.

In her favour we can remember that she placed confidence in the king's oath regarding her son (I Ki. 1:17), recognizing that David had at least six sons older than Solomon. Also, she apparently gave sound training to her son, preparing him for reigning. (The instructions in Proverbs 31:1-9 were likely directed to Solomon, whom she called by the endearing term Lemuel.)

Nevertheless, her memory carries a blemish even in the New Testament (Matt. 1:6).

Believing women (and men) are forcibly reminded to maintain high moral principles and a disciplined life, not allowing piety to be replaced momentarily by unbridled passions.

Her words - Apparently she voiced no complaint, only sorrow, after the death of her first child. (See II Sam. 12:24.) On several occasions she addressed David as "my lord" (I Kings 1:17, 31, etc.).

The above examples do not include certain women whose offspring have caused great problems to God's earthly people the Jews, over the ages. Two of those women were Hagar and Lot's wife. Considering the circumstances of each one, they were only indirectly responsible for the enmity and rebellion promoted by their descendants. Nevertheless, their influence over their children during the early years of development must have left impressions for ill which have been reflected down through the generations.

Although there were many mothers in Israel and in the nations in New Testament times, we have found only four outstanding examples in the Scriptures, with limited information regarding each one. They are listed below, with the name meaning given in parenthesis, and additional comments regarding the place of renown that they occupy in the Scriptures. The list does not include Mary, mother of Jesus. Her unique story is treated separately in Section III of this chapter.

Notable New Testament Mothers

1. Elizabeth (God of the oath), wife of Zacharias, and mother of John Baptist

The first outstanding mother of the New Testament, Elizabeth, and her husband are

introduced in Luke 1 through their outstanding qualities: priestly lineage, a righteous life before God, a blameless walk in all the commandments, etc. It appears rather strange that the Lord hadn't rewarded them with children, since offspring are called "an heritage of the Lord" (Psa. 127:3). However, they apparently shared the confidence that the Lord would answer their prayers for a special child who would be a prophet. He would be used by the Lord as the precursor, to prepare the way for the expected Redeemer and Saviour. In later life she would learn that the Lord "maketh the barren woman to be a joyful mother" (Psa. 113:9). She, like Sarah, was greatly honoured with a unique son in her old age. Furthermore, she is the last of three barren women who later gave birth to sons who were Nazarites, dedicated to the Lord from the womb. We can be sure that she and her husband raised the child in the fear of the Lord, in strict observance of the Nazarite vow.

Besides bringing into the world the promised "Elias who was for to come" (Matt. 11:14, Mal. 4:5), she is remembered because of the blessing pronounced upon Mary, who visited her during the latter three months of her pregnancy. Filled with the Holy Spirit at the moment of Mary's arrival, Elizabeth referred to her kinswoman as "the mother of my Lord" (Lk. 1:43).

Her words - "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me . . . to take away my reproach" (Luke 1:25). "He shall be called John" (Luke 1:60). However, her most outstanding utterance, found in Luke 1:42-45, includes 8 sublime phrases which may be summarized as follows: blessing upon Mary, blessing upon the womb, the mother of my Lord, the salutation, the joy of the unborn babe, the blessing upon believing, and the Divine performance.

2. Mary of Jerusalem, mother of John Mark
(The name Mary has several conflicting meanings: bitterness, rebellion or strong)

Her renown - Apparently a woman of wealth and position, she was likely a sister to Barnabas, a Levite from Cyprus and a landowner. Her house, well-known to the Christians, was large enough to provide a meeting place for the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). Mary was quite willing to use it as well for a continuous, unceasing prayer meeting, despite the great danger of being discovered by the civil authorities. Upon his miraculous release, Peter knew where he would find the Christians and felt assured of a warm welcome. It is paradoxical that those in the house, praying continuously for his preservation, were momentarily unwilling to receive Peter into the house because of unbelief.

Surely the different sacrifices involved, such as the ministry of offering her house as a meeting place for the assembly in Jerusalem, were used by the Spirit of God to prepare Mary's son John Mark for a special ministry. Initially, in his apprenticeship, he had deserted Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. However, in later years he was highly recommended by Paul in the apostle's closing words (II Tim. 4:11). He is also commended in three other epistles. He is considered to be the writer of the Gospel by Mark.

3. Salome (strength, or peace, prosperity, safety) - wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John, two apostles

Her renown - Apparently a sister of Mary the mother of Jesus, she had seen her two sons leave the fishing partnership they

shared with their father Zebedee in order to obey the Lord's higher command, "Follow me." She didn't hinder them in their obedience and sacrifice in the master's service. His calm presence and meekness would be beneficial for these two "sons of thunder", known for their impetuous, fiery ways. It was of special interest to learn as well that Jesus had shown a special affection for the one son John.

Now she felt it was in order to request favored status for her sons in His kingdom (Mt. 20:20,21). However, the request seemed very ill-timed. The Lord had just reminded His disciples of the suffering He was to endure, ending in death by crucifixion, to be followed by His triumph in resurrection. Shortly before, he had replied to a question from Peter, promising the disciples each a throne in glory and rewards (Mt. 19:28,29). It was logical for her to have motherly ambitions, but they sprang out of selfish motives, easily detected by the other ten disciples as they heard her say, "my two sons." The Lord graciously replied that they could participate with Him in His sufferings, but only the Father could grant special privileges in the future kingdom. In the end, Jesus did grant a special earthly privilege to the son named John, in Salome's hearing (see Jn. 19:25-27). She demonstrated her devotion to the Lord by being present at the cross and later at the tomb (Mt. 27:56, Mk. 15:40, 16:1).

4. Eunice (well-won, lit. happy victory) mother of Timothy

Her renown - Very few general details are written about her except that she was "a certain woman" (Acts 16:1), married to a Greek. No details are furnished regarding her spiritual state when she married, either

as an unbeliever or in an unequal yoke. In any case, she was a believer when Timothy was born, since he had heard the Scriptures from infancy (II Tim. 3:15). It may be concluded that her husband never did share Eunice's enthusiasm for spiritual things, not even for Judaism. Apparently Timothy was saved through the Gospel ministry of Paul the apostle, who directed two epistles to his beloved "son in the faith." The two epistles, as well as the book of Acts, provide us with a few details regarding Timothy's upbringing.

Both Eunice and her mother Lois were linked together in their determination to teach the young boy, first by their example of genuine faith (II Tim. 1:15), followed by consistent daily teaching of the Holy Scriptures (II Tim. 3:14-15). Likely they had limited knowledge of the truth, and limited access to the Old Testament scrolls in Tarsus, but they seized every opportunity to teach the child, who might possibly have suffered from a weak physical constitution (see I Tim. 5:23). However, his spiritual vitality and strength, fortified by his knowledge of the Scriptures, earned him the high esteem of the saints in Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:2), and later of Paul the apostle. It all began with the excellent foundation laid by the two faithful women, labouring diligently at home in obscurity in that vocation and calling in life for which they were specially fitted by the the Lord.

Surely each mother who reads this section can find something in these examples to encourage her. The details given in this study are very sparse, and the reader's time will be well-invested in examining the account of each woman as recorded in the Scriptures. Conclusions can be drawn regarding the mother's influence for good upon her children,

particularly during those early formative years in the child's development.

The most outstanding woman of the Holy Scriptures is Mary, the mother of our Lord. All generations will continue to call her "blessed" (Luke 1:48), since eternal blessings and Divine promises have been bestowed upon every generation through the Son. The unique story of her life is briefly set forth in the following study.

III. Profile of Mary, Mother of Jesus

The story of Mary can be divided into three periods which are linked with her status as a virgin, as a wife and mother, and as a widow. Some outstanding points connected with each period are suggested below.

Mary's Life as a Virgin

The Divine plan and the different places involved would reveal to us that all the events occurred by Divine choice and appointments. Both the Plan and the Places are set forth briefly in the study below.

1. The Plan - by Divine choice

The Gospel by Luke, chapters 1 through 3, furnish us with most of the details regarding Mary's early life as a virgin. In chapter 3, her acceptability before God from a genealogical standpoint is accredited.

The genealogy of Mary includes 77 generations, extending back to God (Luke 3:23-28). By way of explanation, the

genealogy recorded in Matthew 1 is generally considered to be that of Joseph. Both he and Mary were descendants of David, but from different sons (Solomon versus Nathan). Since one of Joseph's ancestors was Coniah (see Matt. 1:11 and Jer. 22:28-30), any natural descendant of his was prophetically barred from occupying the throne of David. Our Lord Jesus was the natural Son of Mary only, but inherited the legal rights to the throne through Joseph.

In Luke chapter 1, the early history of Mary is inserted in the midst of events concerning the birth of the forerunner, John the Baptist. The angel Gabriel was chosen for the annunciation (Luke 1:28-37). Mary willingly accepted the Divine plan and humbly submitted to whatever the Word of the Lord required (Luke 1:38). Later, in the presence of Elizabeth, she broke forth spontaneously into a wonderful anthem of rejoicing, consisting of 15 sublime statements (Luke 1:46-55). Although the self-seeking proud, mighty and rich are mentioned in her anthem, she utters no imprecations against them.

Luke chapter 2 discloses events relating to the birth of the Lord Jesus and His early infancy, as well as a brief glimpse of His "business" even at an early age and of Mary's motherly concern, although not properly expressed, upon finding Him in the temple.

2. The Places - by Divine appointment

Four places figure in this period in her life, as follows:

- a. In Nazareth where the annunciation took place - Luke 1:26-38.

- b. In Judea, involving her visit to Elizabeth - Luke 1:39-56.
- c. In Bethlehem, accompanied by Joseph. There the Child was born (Luke 2:4-7), and the shepherds made their nocturnal visit (Luke 2:16-19). Then eight days later the rite of circumcision and naming of the Child were performed (Luke 2:21), in all likelihood in Bethlehem.
- d. In Jerusalem, 40 days (Lev. 12:2-4) after the birth of Jesus, three events occurred, as follows:
 - 1) The Child was presented to the Lord - Luke 2:22-24.
 - 2) Simeon took the Child into his arms and blessed God - Luke 2:25-35.
 - 3) Anna, an old prophetess, rejoiced - Luke 2:36-38.

Mary's Life as Wife and Mother

1. Changes in residence

a. In Bethlehem -

We have assumed, for various reasons, that Joseph and Mary set up residence in Bethlehem for nearly two years, but left there almost immediately after the visit of the wise men (Mt. 2:11, 16). However, we are aware that some students of the Scriptures consider that the wise men journeyed to Nazareth, basing their conclusions on Luke

2:39. In our estimation, several events recorded in Matthew 2 and Luke 2 would link up better with Bethlehem. (See Appendix I.)

b. In Egypt -

In all probability, this residence lasted only a few months, until Herod's death in 4 B.C. (see Matthew 2:13-21).

c. In Nazareth - Matthew 2:22-23.

2. Children born - It appears evident that Jesus was the Firstborn of Mary, but not her only son. Evidently Joseph and Mary were parents of four other sons, and several daughters. (See Matthew 13:55-56, Mark 6:3.)
3. Chiding of the Firstborn (Luke 2:48-51) - This event, which occurred in the court of the temple at Jerusalem, provides the only glimpse, and a very brief one, of those silent years throughout His childhood, youth and manhood, prior to His public manifestation. Yet we are assured that throughout those years "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

Mary's Life as a Widow

We have concluded that Mary was a widow when she appeared later, on four occasions, as follows:

1. At the marriage in Cana (John 2:1-5). On that occasion her words were not proper.
2. In Galilee (Matt. 12:46-50, Mark 3:31-35, Luke 8:19-21). On that occasion her visit was not convenient.
3. At the cross (John 19:25-27). Her presence near the cross gave opportunity for the dying Saviour to commend her into a disciple's care.

4. In the upper room (Acts 1:14). Her occupation in prayer, in expectation of the Spirit's coming, is certainly a remarkable way in which the Spirit of God ends the story of Mary.

Certainly Mary figured very prominently in the birth and early life of the Lord Jesus, being His mother. However, the Scriptures reveal that many other women ministered to Him in a practical way, "of their substance" (Luke 8:3), during His years of public ministry. We will briefly note some of those women in the succeeding study.

IV. Practical Christianity Displayed

Below are listed ten women, most of whom appear in more than one of the Gospels, who ministered to Jesus in regard to His daily needs, utilizing their own material possessions in that service. In addition, there were "many other women," as recorded three times (Matt. 27:55, Mark 15:41, Luke 8:3). The name meanings appear in parenthesis, followed by a list of the references where their names appear.

Ten Women Who Ministered to Jesus

- 1 Mary Magdalene (of Magdala - "tower")
- Matt. 27:56,61; 28:1, Mark 15:40,47,
16:1,9; Luke 8:2, 24:10, John 19:25;
20:1-2,11-18.
2. Martha (lady) of Bethany
- Luke 10:38-42; John 11, John 12:2
- 3 Mary (several conflicting meanings:
bitterness, rebellion, or strong) of

Bethany

- Luke 10:39-42, John 11, John 12:3-8

4. Joanna (God-given) - Luke 8:3, 24:10
5. Susana (lily) - Luke 8:3
6. Mary mother of James
- Matt. 27:56,61; 28:1; Mark 15:40,47; 16:1;
Luke 24:10
7. Salome (strength) - Mark 15:40, 16:1
8. Mary wife of Cleophas - John 19:25 (Luke
24:18)
9. Peter's mother-in-law - Mark 1:30-31
10. Unidentified woman who anointed Jesus in Simon's
house in Bethany
- Matt. 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9

The study above reveals to us the special devoted care that certain pious women lavished upon the Lord Jesus during His sojourn on earth, marked by poverty, loneliness and rejection. They recognized that He alone understood the heart of a woman and knew how to satisfy the deep longings of their heart. His was a unique ministry to women and their problems.

V. Problems Revealed in Certain Women Found in the New Testament

The New Testament begins with a bold display of women who had serious moral problems. The genealogy of Joseph, the guardian or "legal father" of Jesus, occupies a major part of Matthew chapter 1. That genealogy includes four women, each of whom had a moral blot associated with her, but later became a

special object of Divine grace. We may be assured that not one of them continued in her former immoral practice. Nevertheless, only the grace of God could include them in the ancestry of Him who is without blemish. The four women are listed below, with explanations regarding their problems. The name meanings are given in parenthesis.

Progenitors of Jesus

-Four women with serious moral problems

1. Tamar (a palm tree) - Matthew 1:3
 - A fornicator, who gave birth to twins by her father-in-law, Judah (Gen. 38, Ruth 4:12, I Chron. 2:4). The genealogy list also includes the second twin Zara, the one with a scarlet thread bound upon his hand at birth (Gen. 38:27-30).
2. Rahab (breadth) - Matthew 1:5
 - A former harlot, who married Salmon and gave birth to Boaz. Her past reputation should have barred her from being past identified with Israel. On the contrary, her reputation is twice mentioned in the N.T. (Heb. 11:31, James 2:25), revealing that Divine grace was in operation.
3. Ruth (friendship, beauty) - Matthew 1:5
 - A former Moabitess, who married Boaz and gave birth to Obed, grandfather of David. The prohibition of Deuteronomy 23:3 would have been applied but for the grace of God.
4. Bathsheba (daughter of the oath), identified by the name of her first husband Urias - Matthew 1:6
 - A former adulteress, whose second child by David was Solomon. The death penalty of Deuteronomy 22:22 should have been applied but for the grace of God.

Several incidents concerning women who had unique problems are recorded in the Gospels. Each of those women found relief in the Person of Christ, Who ever manifested compassion and a meek and gentle way toward them. Below are listed six unnamed women who learned that Christ is truly the Great Physician, both physically and spiritually. Three of them had insurmountable physical problems, and the remaining three had insupportable moral problems. The Lord Jesus fully satisfied the present need of each woman, and in all likelihood, the spiritual need of each of the six. Besides identifying them, the following list also expresses the outstanding response of each woman to the Lord Jesus.

Problems Which Were Unique

-Six unnamed Women who met Jesus

1. Hemorrhaging woman (12 years) in Capernaum
Mark 5:25-34 (Mt. 9:18-26, Lk. 8:40-56)
- Full confession of this helpless, impoverished woman, who told all the truth to the Great Physician.
2. Bowed-together woman (18 years), of Judea
Luke 13:10-13
- Profound thankfulness of this straightened woman, who glorified God after being healed by Him who was able to loose her.
3. Canaanite woman, in coasts of Tyre and Sidon
Matt. 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30
- Great faith of this humbled Canaanite woman, whose demon-possessed daughter was healed by the one to whom even the demons must be subject.

4. Samaritan woman, near Samaria
John 4
- Full satisfaction of this hapless woman whose soul was filled with living waters from the true Source.
5. Sinful woman, in Simon's home in Nain (?) Luke 7:37-50
- Genuine repentance of this former harlot, who demonstrated her devotion to the Great Pardoner.
6. Adulterous woman, in the temple in Jerusalem
John 8:3-11
- Great revelation to this shameful sinner, who was not condemned by the tender, compassionate Saviour.

In this section we will consider one more study involving women and their unique problems. On five occasions in John's Gospel the Lord Jesus held lengthy conversations with certain select women, only some of whom were morally upright. Each of the women had the opportunity to learn deep spiritual truths, which hitherto had not been revealed. The list below reveals something of the heart of each woman, and the confidence manifested by the Lord in their spiritual comprehension.

Personal Conversations
Between Jesus and Certain Women
-Five incidents in John's Gospel

1. John 2 - at the Marriage in Cana
- with His distressed mother Mary. His statement, "Mine hour is not yet come" (v.4) was a revelation of His death.

2. John 4 - at the Well in Samaria
 - with the discontented Samaritan.His statement, "I am (the Christ)" (v.26) was a revelation of Himself as Messiah.
3. John 8 - in the Temple in Jerusalem
 - with the disgraced adulteress.His statement, "Neither do I condemn thee" (v.11) reveals in part His mission in this world.
4. John 11 - in Bethany
 - with the disconsolate sisters Martha and Mary.His statement, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (v.25) reveals the assurance of His resurrection.
5. John 20 - at the Tomb in the Garden
 - with the desolate Mary Magdalene. His statement, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father..." (v.17) reveals the truth of His ascension and High Priestly service.

In each of the four Gospels we can trace the steps of the Lord Jesus as He journeyed accompanied by His chosen disciples. Surely the disciples enjoyed unequalled opportunity to witness and participate in wonderful experiences. However, there were certain unique acts of devotion in which no man, not even one of the disciples, was chosen to participate.

These peerless experiences were reserved for women. We will consider some very touching scenes which unfold to us the gentleness, kindness and humility bound up in a woman's heart. Truly their humility was their hidden strength. Above all, they demonstrated an extraordinary capacity for devotion, with deepest feelings of love for Him who truly has loved us "unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).

VI. Peerless Experiences of Certain Women Recorded in the Gospels

The first unique experience in the New Testament, apart from Elizabeth conceiving at an advanced age, was that of Mary of Nazareth. She was visited by the angel Gabriel; then she conceived by the Holy Spirit. Shortly after, while visiting Elizabeth in the Judean hills, she broke forth into a wonderful song of rejoicing.

The Unique Song of Mary - Luke 1:46-55

This sublime song of praise and adoration contains 15 statements. In the first seven statements she expressed her gratefulness to the Lord for His blessing and mercy. Then follow six statements regarding His power, particularly directed against the self-seeking proud, mighty and rich. The song closes with reference to Israel and the promises made to Abraham.

The song contains no condemnation nor imprecation, in contrast to the song of Deborah (Judges 5) and the prayer of Hannah (I Sam. 2:1-10).

Another unique experience of women concerns the anointing of the Lord Jesus. Certainly He has been divinely-anointed, at the beginning of His public ministry as Preacher (Luke 4:18), and in His exaltation, as the Preeminent One (Heb. 1:9).

However, during His earthly sojourn only women physically anointed Him. Each time a costly alabaster box of ointment was used. The first anointing apparently occurred near the beginning of

His public ministry. The others occurred almost at the end of His ministry, six days and two days, respectively, before He offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins. It is remarkable that in the latter two anointings the women were anticipating His burial. Evidently they had heard Him teach, likely while sitting at his feet in Mary's case (Lk. 10:39), and had comprehended what His disciples hadn't even understood. The three anointings are listed below.

Unique Anointings of Jesus

1. On His feet, by a sinful woman, in the house of Simon the Pharisee, likely located in Nain. Luke 7:37-38, 44-46
2. On His feet, by Mary of Bethany, in her home, six days before the Passover. - John 12:1-3
3. On His head, by an unnamed woman in Bethany, two days before the Passover.
- Matt. 26:6-7, Mark 14:3

Note: In our estimation, there are a number of outstanding differences which distinguish between the anointing in John 12 and the subsequent one recorded in Matthew 26 and Mark 14. See Appendix II.

In three different incidents, women had the opportunity to give expression to their inmost tender feelings while they wept in Jesus presence. Each of the three acknowledged Jesus as Lord, the first one by her acts of devotion and the remaining two by their spoken words. In contrast, not one of the twelve disciples ever wept in His presence, although Peter did weep in remorse and

repentance after having denied the Lord (Matt. 26:75, Luke 22:62).

The chart below lists the three women and the Scripture references, with a brief statement that suggests the load that each was carrying and the work of Divine grace completed in her.

Unique Weepings in the Presence of Jesus

1. Luke 7:37-38, 44-48 - a sinful woman, with her load of sin.
- Conversion to Christ resulting.
2. John 11:33 - Mary of Bethany, with her load of grief.
- Consolation from Christ received.
3. John 20:11-18 - Mary Magdalene, with her load of loneliness.
- Confidence in Christ reassured.

The above reference to Mary Magdalene reminds us of one other peerless experience which is most certainly worthy of mention.

The First Eyewitness of the Lord in Resurrection

Mary Magdalene was the first person on earth to see the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrection body. This all-important event is recorded in John 20:11-18, and chronicled as well in Mark 16:9. However, her name does not appear in the list of witnesses in I Corinthians 15:5-8.

As we contemplate the unique acts of devotion of those devout, honourable women,

we are reminded that the deepest unparalleled truths regarding worship were introduced, not to a man, but to a woman. Furthermore, the recipient of those truths was a discontented woman who was trying to conceal her long history of marital failure, not an upright exemplary person such as Nicodemus, for example. Since true worship is the theme which courses through all the Scriptures, and will be our eternal occupation, we consider it extremely important to examine briefly the sublime truths revealed to the unnamed Samaritan. Six natural men in her life could never satisfy the spiritual longings of her heart. When she met the blessed Son of Man, her heart was filled to overflowing. She promptly left that empty water pot by the well to demonstrate what true worship will always produce - a heartfelt joy and desire to proclaim the blessed news to others, "Come see a Man which told me..." (John 4:29).

VII. Profound Truths Regarding Worship, as Revealed to the Samaritan (John 4:19-24)

Worship, or worth-ship, is defined as the quality of a person or thing that lends importance and merit to it, and that is measured by the esteem in which it is held. In regard to another person, it represents our highest estimation of that person because of his superior qualities which we admire. As we worship God we are contemplating in our heart His inestimable worth, that intrinsic excellence ascribed to Him because of His infinite moral, spiritual and eternal Being. The subject is so vast that three basic Hebrew words in the Old Testament, and three basic Greek words in the New Testament, can hardly offer the full expression of what our worship should include. As well, there are six additional Greek words found in the New

Testament to express certain facets of worship. However, we will limit our study to the truths expounded by the Lord Jesus in His private dialogue with that most unlikely person, the Samaritan woman.

We might note in passing that the conversation with the woman was in reality a dialogue. In the English translation of the passage (John 4:7-26), there are 205 words (in 11-1/2 verses) which were spoken by Jesus and 105 words (in 7-1/2 verses) which were spoken by the woman. However, when He discoursed on true worship (verses 21-24), after discovering to her eyes what was in the depths of her heart, she listened enraptured, unable to offer any comment except to exclaim at the end, "I know that Messias cometh..." We will consider the truths regarding worship from this passage in three aspects, as follows: the rival worship, the introduction to true worship and the elements of true worship.

The Rival Worship Set up by the Fathers

-John 4:19-20

The Samaritan woman recognized that the only form of worship she knew was inadequate and transitory. In reality, the form of worship which was taught her had been a rival to Judaism, begun around 433 B.C. in Samaria. From Nehemiah 13:28 and Josephus' writings we learn that Manasseh, grandson of Eliashib the high priest, had secretly married the daughter of the Jews' arch-enemy, Sanballat the Horonite, governor of Samaria. Filled with righteous indignation, Nehemiah drove out the young man from Jerusalem. He fled to his father-in-law in Samaria carrying a copy of the Torah, or Pentateuch, with him. There on Mt. Gerizim in Samaria he established a rival worship.

Now over four centuries later this

Samaritan follows:

woman recognized five things, as

1. The perception which she had of this Prophet whom she had just met was very limited.
2. The practice of worship with which she was familiar was only traditional, of the fathers.
3. The point of reference in her worship had geographical limitations, being linked with a mount which she could see.
4. The prospect which was filling her heart with hope was enlightenment regarding something better.
5. The place which she had heard about where God had placed His Name must be Jerusalem.

Now that her conscience had been aroused to her need and her confidence toward this Man was increasing, her condition of heart was being prepared to receive His teaching. First He must introduce her to the implications of true worship.

Introduction to True Worship

-John 4:21,22

In our estimation, the Lord Jesus expressed seven preliminary conditions as an introduction to the basic truths of worship which He would reveal to the Samaritan woman. The seven points are listed below:

1. The confidence which is essential for believing.
2. The completion of the appointed moment, or "hour", for true worship to begin.

3. The conception of a new pattern of worship.
4. The contemplation of what it means to worship the Father.
5. The confusion regarding what worship really is.
6. The comprehension of true worship.
7. The choosing of a people, the Jews, to reveal God's great plan of salvation.

The Lord continued His discourse, with the enraptured woman as His only audience, as He expounded the central truths of this glorious theme.

True Worship - John 4:23,24

The Lord Jesus expressed in a seven-fold manner the essence of true worship, as follows:

1. The preparations of the past have been completed, and true worship is about to be unveiled.
2. The point in time is "now" for true worship to begin.
3. The Person to worship is the Father.
4. The practice is defined as "in spirit and in truth" (i.e., the spirit of the worshipper is controlled by the Holy Spirit in the light of the revealed truth in the Word of God and centered upon Christ Himself).

5. The purpose of the Father is to seek true worshippers.
6. The plan requires the worshipper to acknowledge that God is Spirit.
7. The prerequisite is to search one's own spirit and allow His truth to permeate our being.

Surely many more Scriptures could be analyzed to further enhance our knowledge and appreciation of this wonderful theme. However, we will limit our study to this sublime revelation offered to a woman, which we consider to be the most extensive treatise on the subject of worship throughout the Scriptures.

The foregoing studies reveal that the New Testament contains a wealth of information on women, without dedicating any books or major sections to their history. Glimpses of their inward longings and heart desires flash into view in the Gospels. Their conduct and regulating principles are portrayed in the Acts and the Epistles. All is intended to give them the deepest joy and a sense of fulfillment in being obedient to the Lord and His commands. At the same time, they are lifted up to an honourable position, praised and even publicly acclaimed by godly men, admired and respected by all.

No women were chosen by the Spirit of God to write any books of the Bible. (Regarding Ruth and Esther, the two books named after women, some commentaries suggest that the book of Ruth was probably written by Samuel. The writer of Esther is essentially unknown, although some might suggest Mordecai, others Ezra or even Nehemiah.) However, a few were specially chosen to receive prophetic

revelations. We will conclude the principal studies in this chapter by considering the prophetesses whose names appear in both testaments. This study further convinces us that the Lord places a high value upon the spiritual intelligence of devout women and their capacity to receive special Divine communications for His people. However, we must emphasize that every Divine communication today is exclusively in His Son (Heb. 1:2), through the written Word of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

VIII. Prophetesses of the Bible

The prophets of old spoke forth the mind and counsel of God. In general, they received a specific and personal call from God, and were divinely inspired to communicate a Divine message. Their message was often an interlocking of proclamation and prediction, distinguishing them from mere prognosticators. The Spirit of God would rest upon them and move them to announce or declare God's will to His people, and to disclose the future to them.

The prophetesses apparently functioned in Old Testament times in a manner similar to that of the prophets, with some notable differences in their sphere and scope of ministry. It appears evident that they had fixed dwelling places, not traveling about in a circuit, as was the case with Samuel, for example (I Sam. 7:16-17).

Furthermore, their ministry was limited in scope. Not one of them claimed to have supernatural revelations regarding future events. Rather, their ministry was linked to moments of great crisis in Israel's history, and their revelations in general were limited

to seeking deliverance from the imminent threatening situation. Neither did they experience the visits of angelic messengers, such as occurred with a number of prophets and as well, with certain women not called prophetesses, such as Hagar (Gen. 16:7-13, 21:17-19), the wife of Manoah (Judges 13) and Mary (Luke 1:26-38).

Listed below are ten prophetesses, half of whom are found in the Old Testament, and the remaining half in the New Testament.

1. Miriam, elder sister of Moses -Exodus 15:20
2. Deborah, wife of Lapidoth - Judges 4:4
3. HulDAH, wife of Shallum - II Kings 22:14, II Chronicles 34:22-28
4. Noadiah - Nehemiah 6:14
- Although not called a false prophetess, she was an unfaithful one, who attempted to intimidate Nehemiah, and to whom the words of Ezekiel 13:17 might apply.
5. Unnamed prophetess, wife of Isaiah -Isaiah 8:3
6. Anna, a widow - Luke 2:36
7. Four daughters of Philip the evangelist -Acts 21:9

Note: The above list does not include Jezebel, of Revelation 2:20.

Regarding the New Testament prophetesses, the elderly Anna, who evidently was well over 100 years of age, had a unique ministry in the temple at Jerusalem of serving the Lord continuously with fastings and prayers, in expectation of the arrival of the Redeemer

(Luke 2:36-38). She has left no recorded prophecy, nor have the four daughters of Philip left any either. They apparently lived at home in Caesarea. It is most significant that they did not prophesy in the local church, but within the home. Furthermore, during Paul's visit in their home the apostle received a prophetic message, but not through them. The Lord sent the prophet Agabus from Judea to reveal to him the treatment that awaited the apostle in Jerusalem.

IX. Additional Studies on Women of the Bible

A number of additional studies could be suggested, some of which are incorporated into succeeding chapters of this book. In Chapter 3 there is a list of ten notable women, all of whom were labouring diligently in fellowship with the testimony to the Lord's Name in Rome. Also, the same chapter contains a study of five episodes in the life of Miriam, older sister of Moses. Then in Chapter 4 there is a comprehensive study of the great woman of Shunem, focusing upon three major chapters in her life. Following that, in Chapter 5 there is a list of ten renowned women of the church who were noted in apostolic times for the variety of their ministry as they served the Lord. Also included in that chapter is a detailed review of Deborah, that unique prophetess, judge and mother in Israel. Finally, in the Appendix section there are a few supplementary studies on women, included for the purpose of amplifying our understanding of studies or points briefly mentioned earlier in the book.

Chapter Two

INTRODUCTORY STUDY

"And a certain woman named Lydia . . . whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

Acts 16:14

The verse at the heading of this chapter reminds us that the first recorded convert in Europe was a woman, Lydia. The Lord, in His grace and goodness, opened her heart to receive the Word and to be attentive to the truth. She, in grateful devotion and demonstration of faithfulness to the Lord, opened her home to receive the apostle to the Gentiles and his companions in the Lord's service.

In this chapter the Divine purposes, Divine plan, and Divine principles revealed in regard to the woman and her ministry are examined. The Divine purposes and plan refer us back to creation and to the disobedience and consequent fall in Eden. The Divine principles establish the equality of women with men, coupled with their assigned place of subjection to the administrative authority given to the man.

It is important throughout this study to keep in focus the eventual fulfillment of the Divine purposes and plans upon the earth. The fulfillment essentially carries us far beyond the first Adam, to the completed work of the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45), our Lord Jesus Christ. All Divine purposes are being

perfectly fulfilled in Christ, who by the sacrifice of Himself has purged our sins and redeemed us to God by His blood. At His second coming, He will have undisputed dominion over this earth and will continue His work of subduing and restoring all that has been ravaged by sin. Eventually, in the new creation, all things in the universe will be redeemed and restored, that God might be recognized in the future eternal state as being everything to every part of His creation (see I Cor. 15:28).

I. The Divine Purposes in Creation

The Divine purposes for man upon earth are set forth in Genesis 1 and 2. In first place, there was a pattern of five commands whereby the re-ordered earth would again show "His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1) and bring Him glory. Following that, the creation of the woman consisted of a procedure of seven progressive steps.

The five Divine commands given to man are set forth in Genesis 1:28. The previous verse, which contains the phrase "male and female created He them," reveals that both are equally important, with priority given to the male only in the order of creation. It also suggests that joint effort and mutual dependence of both were required to carry out the Creator's will. The five commands are briefly stated below.

The Pattern of Five Commands Given to Man -Genesis 1:28

1. Fruitfulness - "Be fruitful"
2. Increasing - "Multiply"
3. Replenishing - "Replenish the earth"

4. Subduing - "Subdue it"
5. Dominion - "Have dominion over"
- This dominion included the three realms: the sea, the air and the land.

Immediately following the stated commands, the creation story of the woman is presented in Genesis 2, set forth in minute detail unlike any other creatorial work, including that of the man. Her role as a "help", to make complete the man, was of incalculable importance for the fulfillment of Divine plans in regard to His universal creation and its redemption. She would complement the man in order that God might be more fully represented upon earth, and eventually receive greater honour and glory. The progressive steps in her creation are set forth below.

The Procedure in the Creation of the Woman
-Genesis 2:18, 21-23

1. Recognition - of an "help" for the man's good.
2. Relaxing - of the man's body and soul would better prepare him to receive the Divine provision.
3. Response - of the man involved his will to submit to the Divinely-induced sleep.
4. Removal - of his prime rib was by Divine calculation, for the man's enjoyment and endearment.
5. Restorin^g - of the flesh implies that no open wound remained.
6. Preparing - of the woman by "building" (v.22), in contrast to "forming" (v.7) of the man.

7. Presenting - of the new created being for the man's completeness and acceptance. It might be noted that she was "brought" to the man, not in any way forced upon him. At the same time, he desired her and recognized his need of her, even in the pristine earthly paradise not yet corrupted by disobedience and its aftermath of suffering. How much more is the woman needed today in this chaotic, degenerate world, so ripe for judgment. She provides that gentleness, sympathy, understanding and warmth in a loving home atmosphere to which the man can retreat for physical refuge and spiritual recharging.

II. The Divine Plan in Operation

In this section, based primarily on Genesis chapters 2 and 3, we will consider first the position of authority which was delegated to the man, followed by the usurping of that authority by the woman. Then some thoughts are suggested re^garding the securing of the new creation in Christ, both in position and in practice.

The Position of Authority

The position of authority has been given to the man. He is the representative of God upon earth. This position represents both privilege and responsibility. No doubt this assigned seat of authority has in view the future day when Christ, the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45) will occupy that seat as rightful Heir, fully capable Leader and Commander (Isa. 55:4), and triumphant Lord and King. In Genesis 2, prior to the fall in Eden, Adam was given the privilege of naming every

living creature. The Lord God even brought them to him (Gen. 2:19). However, after the fall of both the man and woman, Adam was confronted with the responsibility of his position of authority. The Lord God first directed three questions to him, not the woman, even though she had been first in the transgression.

The Place Usurped by the Woman

The woman began her career of error when she usurped the place of authority, or headship, which had originally been delegated to Adam. Thus she made a decision which should have been her husband's responsibility, to disobey by eating. In reality, it appears that she erred in at least six ways in the garden, prior to eating. First of all, she denied headship to Adam, in leaving his side to wander off alone. This was followed by dissatisfaction with the "good" creation, disregard of the Divine warning, doubt regarding God's goodness, and departure from the way of obedience. Finally, when she distorted His Word (v.3), there was no remedy left. She became an easy victim of the serpent's astuteness. Undoubtedly, the angels witnessed this chain of disobedience in her thoughts, words and action.

The consequences of the disobedience of both were far reaching. We must remember that Adam was not deceived (I Tim. 2:14). He deliberately disobeyed the Word of the Lord in order to please his wife. After the transgression the Lord spoke first to him (Gen. 3:9,11), because he had been Divinely-entrusted with authority upon the earth. The Divine curse was pronounced upon Him for two reasons: 1) he obeyed the voice of his wife and 2) he didn't heed the voice of the Lord. (Gen. 3:17).

The Protection of the New Creation

Thankfully, the new creation has received full protection, having been eternally secured in Christ Jesus, with no possibility of falling. The Lord has given us His written Word, containing unconditional promises which cannot fail. That same Word includes detailed instructions regarding practical subjection, both in symbol and in attitude, for our individual guidance while here on earth.

The subjection of the woman is a necessity for the man's mental/emotional nature if he is going to occupy the place of authority as the divine representative upon earth. This is not chauvinistic theory, nor a "macho" characteristic. In our opinion, it is a built-in male requirement, by Divine planning, which penetrates at all levels of society. Any aberration will adversely affect leadership in society in general. Certainly it will upset balanced leadership in the home, as well as in the assembly. Lack of subjection will undoubtedly affect spiritual growth in any woman who belongs to Christ.

At the same time, a godly brother will not nurture an attitude of male dominance or superiority. In the assembly he will seek to respect and treat the sisters with tender care, showing honour toward older women and widows, and purity toward all (I Tim. 5:2,3). In the home he will give honour unto his wife, "as unto the weaker vessel" (I Pet.3:7).

III. The Divine Principles in Manifestation

Among the numerous Divine principles which are established in the Scriptures,

three are linked with the theme of this study; namely, superiority, equality and subjection. The three principles are discussed below.

Equal Superiority to Lower Creation

Clearly set forth in Scripture is the superiority of one order of creation over that of another. Angelic beings are superior to human beings. However, the new creation in Christ Jesus, called sons of God, is vastly superior to that of angels (Heb.1:14). Man is superior to other life on earth, having been given authority to subdue and have dominion over the inferior earthly creation (Gen. 1:28). This superiority and authority to dominate is shared equally by the human male and female, as revealed in Genesis 1:26--Let them have dominion.

Personal Equality

The equality between the Father and the Son is clearly revealed in John 10:30. Likewise, the equality existing between men and women is clearly stated in I Corinthians 11:11-12 and Galatians 3:26-28. Never do the Scriptures relegate the woman to an inferior position. On the contrary, she is lifted to an honourable position, acclaimed and praised by godly men, admired and respected by all. It is noteworthy that the Lord Jesus always spoke kindly and tenderly to women.

Subjection to Administrative Authority

The Son of God clearly demonstrated His willing subjection to His Father's will, in every thought, action and word. He possesses

a separate will, yet His very being has ever been fully and voluntarily permeated with a subjection to the Father's will. It was His "delight" (Psa. 40:8), or unlimited joy and pleasure to fully perform and perfectly fulfill the plans and purposes conceived in the eternal counsels of His Father. This is revealed in His words spoken on a number of occasions, as follows: John 5:30, 6:38; Luke 22:42, etc. The principles underlying His subjection are set forth in I Corinthians 11:3, 15:28, and Hebrews 10:7,9, and apply to every realm in which He has ever been found, in heaven, on earth and even under the earth (Phil. 2:10).

The same principle of subjection of the woman to the man is set forth in I Corinthians 11:3, in the earthly realm. She reflects the virtues of the co-equal Son, Who has forever submitted voluntarily to His Father. Only now in this life can she manifest her obedience to this principle laid down in the Word of God.

We will now consider certain feminine characteristics or qualities which distinguish women from men, both from a practical as well as a spiritual point of view. (See also Appendix III.)

IV. Distinguishing Qualities of Women

Apart from physical and biological differences there are differences in character and in conduct between men and women, which are clearly portrayed in the Scriptures. An understanding of this distinction will help believers to recognize that these differences are Divinely-planned and cannot be ignored nor altered. The popular unisex and role

reversal movements in the world are clearly foreign to the Divine purposes.

We will consider certain differences in character and in conduct which distinguish women from men, particularly from a spiritual viewpoint.

Differences in Character

There are certain inherent feminine characteristics, endowed by the Creator, which can be effective tools for fruitful service for the Lord, but might also be used destructively in any private home or assembly of believers gathered unto the Lord's Name. We will suggest only three of them, recognizing that the list could be extended.

1. A capacity to influence

- The woman has an unusual ability to influence others, particularly her husband and children. Often her attitude at home will permeate the general mood of all in the home, either of joy and satisfaction or of gloom and discontentment. With few exceptions, the husband generally seeks the approval of his wife, and vice versa. As well, the mother molds the character of the child. For example, the majority of the kings of Israel and Judah are identified along with their mothers in the Old Testament chronicles.

2. Rapid perception in social situations

- Women in general possess an uncanny ability to perceive so much with one glance of the eye. In contrast, a man might perceive the same only after a process of reasoning. This special eye perception of the woman can be

detrimental, however, if it leads to lust after worldly things (I Jn. 2:15,16). A careful reading of Genesis 3 reveals that even after the woman had been verbally challenged by the lies of the serpent, her final yielding to temptation was the result of visual contact with the tree and its fruit (Gen. 3:6).

3. Intuition

- Some women seem to be endowed with a unique "sixth" sense, not based on conscious reasoning, which enables them to perceive what others are feeling. This quality or capacity could be positively employed for spiritual benefit of others, in certain social situations. As an example, a somewhat insensitive husband might be gently and diplomatically alerted by his wife before offending others unnecessarily. On the other hand, women are considered to have less capacity than men to reason with abstract thoughts.

In addition to pronounced feminine characteristics, there is something else which is very important to the mind and attitude of a woman - her general appearance and attractiveness before others. We will call it feminine beauty.

Feminine Beauty

Beauty is defined as the quality attributed to whatever pleases or satisfies the senses or mind, and can be measured in many ways. Physical beauty, graciously given or withheld by the Creator, is essentially only skin deep. Many different yardsticks are used to measure beauty. One society values

certain physical characteristics or features more than another. A woman's external beauty can be accentuated in response to the norms and demands of society. The innate feminine desire to enhance her physical attraction for approval by others, both women and men, is true of women of all societies and cultures.

The godly woman recognizes the need to restrain and control those desires to be physically attractive, in order not to eclipse her internal spiritual beauty (I Pet. 3:3,4). She will seek to be guided, not by impulses and natural attraction, but by the inspired Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. To this end, there are numerous exhortations in the Scriptures directed to women, which continually remind them of the necessity to let the internal beauty shine out.

The internal spiritual beauty of the godly woman, as revealed in her righteous character and faithful continuance in the truth, will evoke the admiration of spiritual believers and might even exceed qualities found in spiritual men. Like a beautiful flower unfolding its petals to display its rich hues within, she will exhibit hidden spiritual and moral beauties as follows:

1. By proclaiming the virtues of Him Who has called us....- I Pet. 2:9.
2. By producing the fruit of the Spirit - Gal. 5:22,23.
3. By pressing toward the mark in a life of devotion to Christ - Phil. 3:7-14.

It is a demonstrated fact that in all societies, even pagan, women have an extraordinary capacity for adoration or worship. The believing woman can channel

this natural desire or tendency toward the blessed Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is worthy of the highest and the fullest expression of worship possible here upon earth. In contrast, believing men are often found to be dedicated (or consecrated) more than devoted, practical more than personal, in their demonstration of love for the Lord.

Besides the differences in character, there are differences in conduct which are clearly distinguished when men and women are gathered together in the congregation.

Differences in Conduct, in the congregation

The Man - with uncovered head, he represents Christ the Head and can audibly express the doctrine of Christ.

The Woman - with covered head, she visually illustrates the truth of subjection to the authority of Christ.

In combination - they present an audio/ visual picture before angels and the world. One complements the other, and together they complete the Divine picture on display. They should not be acting in competition in any way. It is readily seen that the woman's role is not inferior or degrading. Rather, she assumes a special place of dignity and honour in accordance with Divine promises (I Sam. 2:30).

V. Preview of Doctrinal Themes to Be Developed

In every society a woman's external appearance, including facial features, hair, modesty, clothing and adornment are observed and evoke comments by others. The Word of God recognizes this fact of human nature, and furthermore makes clear that the external appearance and the internal attitude of heart are definitely linked. In our estimation, three outstanding references from the apostles' doctrine reveal the internal attitude and resulting external appearance of the woman; namely, I Corinthians 11 and 14, I Peter 3 and I Timothy 2. In the succeeding chapters we will take the liberty to link them together as follows: I Corinthians 11 and 14 in the assembly sphere, I Peter 3 in the home sphere, and I Timothy 2 in the world sphere. However, in no way are we suggesting that a particular reference has application only in that particular sphere.

Also, we would suggest that two great earthly prizes, sought after eagerly by both men and women in the world, are revealed in the Lord's temptation in Luke 4:6--namely, power (or authority) and glory. In each of the three Scriptures just named we will search out, on behalf of godly sisters, the symbolic evidences of:

- 1) Subjection, to His authority
- 2) Self-restraint, for His glory

Not only will these symbols be pointed out, but the spiritual reasons will be examined, in the light of the three Scriptures chosen.

It is interesting to note the order of presentation of these two underlying themes

in the three key Scriptures. The simple chart which follows can serve as a reference guide in our development of the doctrinal themes in the succeeding chapters.

1. The Assembly and Symbols for Women
 - Subjection and Self-restraint, in I Corinthians 11 and 14.
2. The Home and Conduct of the Godly Wife
 - Subjection in I Peter 3, verses 1 and 2.
 - Self-restraint in I Peter 3, verses 3 to 5.
3. The World and Distinguishing Features of Women Professing Godliness
 - Self-restraint in I Timothy 2, verses 9 and 10.
 - Subjection, in I Timothy 2, verses 11 and 12.

Chapter Three

GODLY WOMEN IN THE ASSEMBLY

"Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints."

I Corinthians 16:15

The verse at the heading of this chapter reveals the high estimate placed by the Spirit of God upon practical ministry. Apparently all the household of Stephanas (meaning "crowned"), both men and women, were in effect addicted to ministering to other saints in Achaia, that southern region of Greece which included the city of Corinth. Perhaps the effects of their appreciated ministry extended well beyond its borders. Likewise, a self-sacrificing ministry of reaching out to others, emanating from motives of pleasing Christ, will be recognized and appreciated even in far-off corners in these last days when the spirit of the age is characterized by a self-centered love and despising of anything that is associated with God and His Word (II Tim. 3:2-5).

Godly women and their ministry in relation to the local assembly is the underlying theme of this chapter. The local church represents one sphere in which godly sisters can enjoy an abundant ministry, within the guidelines established in the Word of God. However, their extensive ministry will not include any public leadership role as preacher, teacher, etc. The inspired Word of God,

not any supposed chauvinistic ideas invented by Paul, dictates the injunctions which have been established. Devoted women in whom the Truth dwells will be willing to submit to the Divine order. Walking in obedience to the spiritual light they have received, these sisters will lead a fruitful life of service in willing acceptance of the sphere assigned to them by their all-wise Lord, Who knows what ministry is best for them.

As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, two underlying themes will be developed in our doctrinal studies throughout this book: subjection to the authority of the Lord and self-restraint, for His glory. These themes are considered together as we examine the doctrinal teaching for women in I Corinthians chapters 11 and 14, and in particular, the symbols that are mentioned. This teaching will be linked with the assembly sphere, although not confined in practice to assembly meetings only.

We wish to examine not only what are the symbols set forth, but also, why they have been established. What is the spiritual significance of each symbol, focusing in particular upon the woman's head, and upon her hair in the case of the second one? As well, why is she commanded to keep silence in the congregation? As we progress in our studies we must underscore the conviction that the truth presented in I Corinthians and the remaining epistles is neither optional nor subject to modification in accordance with changing times.

However, before examining these Scriptures in depth, we will consider some general observations regarding women and public leadership. It is very significant that they are omitted from positions of authority and spiritual office throughout the New Testament.

I. General Observations from the Scriptures Regarding the Place of Women

A general survey throughout the Bible reveals that the woman's place, although of inestimable importance, does not include a leadership role for public recognition upon earth. No woman ever wrote a book of the Bible, although several books include extensive histories of women and several devout women received Divine messages to communicate to others. Nevertheless, the day is near at hand when in glorified bodies they will be acclaimed and praised before an innumerable host of redeemed saints and angels in heaven. Listed below are ten observations regarding public leadership in the Scriptures and the omission of women.

Ten Points regarding Public Leadership and the omission of Women

They do not figure among:

1. Writers of the books of the Bible -although two books carry as titles the names of women, Ruth and Esther.
2. Apostles -- although at least one apostle was married.
3. Seventy chosen messengers in Luke 10 -although the Lord has used women to carry important messages. (See Matt. 28:7&10, Luke 24:11, John 20:17, Rom. 16:1.)
4. Named witnesses of the resurrection in I Corinthians 15:5-8 -- although the first person to see the risen Christ was a woman, Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9, John 20).

5. Those who spoke in tongues in Acts 2 --although women were present (Acts 1:14).
6. Seven chosen ones in Acts 6:5 -- although the matter was concerning widows.
7. Evangelists in Ephesians 4:11 -- although women laboured in the gospel (Phil. 4:2).
8. Bishops or elders, in Ephesians 4:11, I Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:5, etc. -- although they are mentioned twice in the list of qualifications for elders (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6).
9. Teachers in the list of ministries in Ephesians 4:11 -- although women have been powerful instruments in instructing future teachers, as in the case of Timothy (II Tim. 1:5, 3:14-15).
10. Public witnesses such as the two martyrs of Revelation 11 -- although many brave women have been martyred through the ages (Heb. 11:33,38).

The omission of women from positions of administration and leadership in the Scriptures suggests that theirs is a Divinely-ordained place of subjection in all phases of their life and ministry. This by no means would imply a subservient role. On the contrary, their honoured place and esteemed role in the Scriptures are linked indelibly with their humility, kindness, gentleness and other virtues.

Certain visible symbols form an integral part of the apostles doctrine, as a visual reminder of the woman's role. These symbols are analyzed in the next section.

II. The Symbols of Subjection and Self-Restraint in I Corinthians 11

Two pairs of symbols are set forth in I Corinthians 11. We are well-acquainted with the two symbols used in celebrating the Lord's supper. However, preceding the bread and cup symbols there are two symbols for women in the congregation, presented in the following order: the supplementary head covering, and the natural head covering or long hair. We will consider these two symbols in the order in which they appear in the chapter.

The Supplementary Head Covering and its Spiritual Lessons

The supplementary head covering of the woman in the congregation occupies the primary position in the chapter, in verses 3 through 10. What is its significance? In our estimation, it represents three facets of truth on visible display, as follows: subjection to authority, the veiling of natural glory, and an object lesson before angels. First and foremost, the woman is demonstrating her willingness to be subject to her head (the man), even as the man is subject to his Head (Christ), and Christ to God the Father (v.3). She recognizes that when they are gathered together the man's head is symbolic of Christ and her head is symbolic of the man. Therefore, she covers her head in the congregation to demonstrate that man and his natural abilities are not to be on display. Rather, the preeminent place is reserved exclusively for Christ. This is represented by the man's uncovered head.

At the same time, she is demonstrating her personal desire to cover her own glory, the hair (by inference in verses 6&7), in order not to detract from the spiritual glory of Christ. As a result, the Lord's glory will be more fully displayed in the midst of His people. An illustration of this truth is suggested in the colt upon which the Lord Jesus rode (Mark 11:7). The ass was first covered with garments, then lifted up Jesus for public acclaim by the multitudes of people.

Finally, her supplementary head covering signifies a visible object lesson in the presence of angels, who are observing (v.10). Their special interest in the portrayal of the headship of Christ is an important part of their education in Divine purposes and plans. (See also Ephesians 3:10 and I Peter 1:12.) It is important to remember that the elect angels witnessed the transgression of the woman, as she usurped the place of authority in leaving Adam's side and making the decisions which he should have made. Also, it is our conviction that angels were present when a higher created being, the cherubim Lucifer, demonstrated his rebellion against Divine authority in the heavenly realm (Isa. 14:12-15, Ezek. 28:11-19, etc.). Now they can witness the obedience of the new creation in Christ, visually demonstrated by the symbols of subjection of the believing woman.

The alternative in the case of disobedience is drastic - "let her also be shorn" (I Cor. 11:6). Incidentally, the law of Moses required the head to be shaved in two different situations, as follows: the cleansing of a leper (Lev. 14:8), and the claiming of a captive woman (Dent. 21:12). We might also recall that the uncovered head of a woman in the camp of Israel was generally associated with shame and dishonour, as

revealed in Numbers 5:18. The foregoing teaching from I Corinthians 11, coupled with the above implications from the Old Testament, are sufficient to convince us that a believing woman who, having known the truth, deliberately appears in the congregation without having her head covered is acting in a manner which is most shameful and dishonouring to the Lord.

Practical Considerations on the Supplementary Head Covering

We will consider in particular two practical points regarding the supplementary head covering: the acceptable type of covering and the occasions when its use is required.

1. The acceptable type of head covering

- The type of head covering is not specified in the Scriptures. The instructions given in I Corinthians 11 are not repeated elsewhere for further clarification. Therefore we are limited to that passage alone and to the word meanings in Greek to obtain a clearer understanding of the intent of the apostle's instructions, in practice. In apostolic times the covering was undoubtedly a long veil, fully covering the hair, although not necessarily the entire head (including the face). The original Greek word used for covering (Gr.-katakalypto), doubly emphasized in verse 6, means to cover wholly, i.e., a complete veiling or hiding, down and about. A similar word is used in other Scriptures, including Luke 8:16 and 23:30, to help clarify the meaning. We will avoid unprofitable controversy by refraining from discussing the merits of veils versus hats, and feel that the elders of the local assembly

should be consulted if any difficulty over this or other local matters were to arise. However, it is well to remind the sisters that some of the hat styles do not offer an adequate covering for the head. When making a purchase, they should seriously consider the appearance (or style) and adornment added, as well as the cost of their head covering, in accordance with I Timothy 2:9 and I Peter 3:3.

In regard to the veil, or mantilla, we have found its use quite universal in Latin American countries. It is generally large, and fully covers the woman's hair down to the shoulders. The material is of one solid muted color, without adornment. Some sisters have added an inner lining in order to eliminate the see-through characteristic of some veil materials.

There are some practical considerations associated with the use of veils, which we will insert particularly for the benefit of sisters in Spanish-speaking assemblies. Each sister should ascertain that the veil is fully covering the top of her head, and if necessary, affix the veil to her hair in order to prevent its falling down. Also, there could be a tendency toward using the veil only while seated during a meeting. We would suggest that out of respect for the place where the Christians gather, the veil be placed upon the head before entering the meeting room and remain in place while inside.

2. Occasions when the head covering should be used

- Another matter which has sparked controversy concerns the frequency of use of

the supplementary head covering. Should the woman's head be covered in any gathering for prayer and/or reading of the Word, or simply the regularly-scheduled meetings of the church? Also, should she cover her head even while praying alone, in private? In our estimation, the setting and teaching of I Corinthians 11 encompasses more than the regular church gatherings. We will not be dogmatic nor legalistic, but feel convinced that the Lord will honour and reward every sister who has personal convictions and practices them accordingly, irrespective of whether such practices are socially acceptable or not. May no one belittle or dishearten sisters from following their personal convictions. On the other hand, if a sister does not have personal convictions, she should be willing to submit if the elder brethren of the assembly (or her husband) determine that the supplementary head covering should be used in gatherings which are not considered to be assembly functions.

The Natural Head Covering or Veil

The woman's natural head covering occupies a secondary, but not inferior, place in I Corinthians 11. In our estimation, the Scriptural emphasis in this portion (verses 14 & 15) is on the long hair, not simply hair which is longer than the man's. The woman's hair should be long for two reasons, as follows:

1. The law of nature - her long hair is her ornament and glory.
2. This permanent veil of the woman is displayed continuously in the presence of men and of angels, as a symbol of submission in God's order of creation.

We are aware that some women's hair is very difficult to manage, and controversies could arise over a number of hair problems (uneven growth, split ends, etc.) While we cannot profess to have the answer to the various problems and perplexities confronting sisters, we can direct them to the Lord and His infallible Word, which will guide them toward a Christ-honouring solution. (See Philippians 4:6-7, etc.)

The question - How long should the hair be? - depends, practically speaking, upon how far a woman is willing to go in obedience to her Lord and Master. To any sister who might be wavering, tempted in some measure to follow the fashions of this world, we wish to quote Elijah's challenge - "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him." (I Kings 18:21).

Since the hair is a very sensitive subject with most women, any believing woman will require much grace to exercise self-restraint and maintain an attitude of subjection to the Lord. However, if she is truly godly, her heart will be set on pleasing the Lord, walking in obedience to His Word. She should experience no difficulty in submitting to all the teaching, obeying whatever the Lord commands.

III. The Silence of Women in Church Gatherings (I Corinthians 14)

The brief enjoinder to remain silent is found near the end of the chapter and is preceded by an extensive treatment of one of the transitional sign gifts. Much disorder was prevalent in the assembly in Corinth, where some of the saints apparently gloried in their ability to speak in tongues (the

instantaneous supernatural ability to speak in a recognized earthly language which the speaker had never acquired through study). The religious trend today encourages a false imitation of this practice in public, particularly by zealous women. Therefore the prohibition placed upon the believing women is appropriately located in the same chapter which presents teaching on the transitional gift of speaking in tongues. We are convinced that the enjoinder is binding upon all the women in every gathering of the church, throughout this dispensation. This short portion regarding the silence of women in the congregation (verses 34 & 35) could be amplified by referring as well to I Timothy 2:11 & 12.

The enjoinder contains six pointed statements, as follows: a command to silence, a prohibition while in the congregation, an injunction to obedience, the source of authority (the law), a provision for learning more, and the disgrace associated with women thus usurping and exercising authority over men in the congregation. The law mentioned here certainly precedes the law of Moses, taking us back to the order of creation, and likely as well to the curse pronounced upon the woman. From the context it is evident that the injunction is against their usurping authority, such as would occur in public prayer and public speaking. However, their participation in congregational singing and expressing "Amen" cannot be considered as infringing upon this prohibition.

IV. The Significance of the Apostolic Doctrine in I Corinthians 11 and 14

Truly the Spirit of God anticipated the controversies that would arise in the

interpretation and application of these two passages of Scripture. Paul the apostle stated that it was neither personal nor church custom (I Cor. 11:16) to debate against nor deviate from the truth revealed. Nor was he expressing his individual viewpoint, but the Lord's universal command to all the churches (I Cor. 14:33 & 37), not simply the Corinthian church of apostolic times. Furthermore, these things signify "commandments of the Lord," which would not be superseded by new prophetic revelations. The truth must be simply executed, **in** faithful adherence to the Word of God. Its principles, unchanging for all generations, must be received with conviction, not with a spirit of contention, to be legislated, nor with the attitude of compromise, to be modified or replaced. Rather, strict obedience is imperative for preserving godly order and example.

It is significant that in these chapters which deal with the woman's conduct and head coverings in the congregation, no mention is made of her apparel or manner of dress. That subject is treated by the apostle in other epistles, and will be examined in succeeding chapters of this book. However, at this point we would conclude that the woman's modesty and becoming manner of dress, including feminine-styled clothing, should be evident at all times, not only while assembled for scheduled meetings of the assembly. Thus, she will manifest a genuine transparent character, and her conscience will not be burdened with a double-faced conduct.

Regarding her choice of clothing for any occasion, we are reminded of the prohibition, "the woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto the man" (Dent. 22:5). We will not attempt to analyze the interpretations which some might deduce from this text. The

principle of the verse is quite clear and is unchanging for all generations. Throughout the Scriptures the mind of the Lord is definite that there be a clear distinction between the sexes in their attire as well as in other aspects of their appearance. It is true that the text which we have cited forms a part of the law of Moses, from which the believer in Christ has been freed. However, the liberty that we enjoy in Christ does not in any way grant us the right to a libertine attitude, so prevalent today in the unisex movement of this ungodly world. Our obedience, arising out of motives of love for the Lord, should be greatly superior to Israel's obedience, predicated upon motives of fear. Quite a number of Scriptures should encourage the sisters to choose clothing which is modest and becoming, besides being completely different from masculine styles. Some of those Scriptures, chosen from the apostles' doctrine, are listed here, as follows: Romans 12:1-2; I Corinthians 6:12, 8:9 & 12, 10:31-33; II Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 3:7-8; Colossians 3:1-7 & 12-14.

The teaching in I Corinthians 11 and 14 is concerned in first place with the conduct of the women while assembled together in the congregation. We would also like to consider the teaching regarding their sphere of service, linked with the local church but extending well beyond their conduct while assembled together at the assembly meetings.

V. The Service of Women in the Church

In this section we will examine the extensive sphere of service of women in connection with the local church. However, it is important to first review the Divine plan and

provision for the church, as revealed in the great commission of the risen Lord and the gifts which He has given to His church.

The Great Commission of the Risen Lord

The risen Lord met with His "eleven" true disciples on at least five occasions prior to His ascension. On two of those occasions He imparted personal individual messages, namely to Thomas (Jn. 20:26-29) and to Peter (Jn. 21:14-19). On the remaining three occasions we believe that He gave successive installments of His great commission. The three installments, with pertinent details, are set forth below:

1. Mark 16:15 - On the day of resurrection, in Jerusalem, He commissioned them to "Preach the gospel". This was the mandate to evangelize all creatures.
2. Matthew 28:19 - Possibly three weeks later, on a mountain in Galilee, He commissioned them to make disciples of all nations. The salient point in this comprehensive installment was the mandate to teach in all countries.
3. Acts 1:8 - On the day of ascension, while gathered with them on the Mount of Olives, His departing words to them were: "Ye shall be witnesses (or martyrs) unto Me... unto the uttermost part..." In effect, this was a mandate to testify, unto death if necessary, on all the continents.

Considering the three installments together, we recognize the need for evangelists, for teachers and for true shepherds. This thought leads us naturally to consider

the gifts given by the Lord to His church, in order that perpetual testimony might remain upon earth until His return.

Three General Categories of Gifts
Given to the Church
-I Corinthians 12:4-6

In the Scripture passage cited, the apostle sets forth three general categories of gifts, as follows: ministries, operations and gifts. Each category is explained in further detail below, and linked with other references in the epistles. Each reference contains a detailed list which in our estimation satisfies the requirements of that particular category. The number of items identified with each list appears in parenthesis beside the category.

1. Ministries (5) - Ephesians 4:11,12

- Five ministries were given by the ascended Lord Jesus to the Church, for the three purposes enumerated in verse 12. The first two are considered foundational ministries. Upon the completion of the canon of Scripture, we would conclude that only the three latter ministries have remained permanently, in accordance with the teaching given in I Corinthians 13:8-10. In His sovereign will, the ascended Lord has not given any of these ministries to women.

2. Operations (7) - Romans 12:6-8

- The seven operations are vitally linked with God the Father, and promote Divine order in the midst of His people. We would suggest that three of them are applicable to women, as follows: ministry (deaconry) - in serving, giving -

with simplicity, and showing mercy - with cheerfulness.

3. Gifts (9, and 8) -I Corinthians 12:8-10, 28

- The gifts given by the Spirit are intended to produce unity among the saints. In the passage cited two lists are enumerated, with foundation gifts and ministry gifts being interspersed. The lists include several transitional sign gifts, for a sign to unbelievers (I Cor. 14:22). We would suggest that at least two of the gifts can be exercised by women today: faith (v.9) and helps (v.28).

Having just considered the categories of gifts given to the church, and the particular gifts which can be exercised by women, it is in order for us to search in the epistles for examples of godly women who were diligent in developing their particular gifts. Apparently there were a number of outstanding women in the assemblies in the capital of the Roman empire. Their names are coupled with brief glimpses of their noble ministry.

Notable Women of Rome
and Their Noble Ministry

-Romans 16:1-15

Before closing his epistle to the Romans, the apostle sends loving greetings to 29 esteemed saints, including 10 women. The names of the women are listed below. The meaning of each name is included in parenthesis.

1. Phebe (shining, radiant)
2. Priscilla (ancient one)
3. Mary (several conflicting meanings: bitterness, rebellion or strong)

4. Junia (youthful)
5. Tryphena (dainty, luxurious)
6. Tryphosa (disdain, shining)
7. Persil (woman of Persia)
8. Mother of Rufus (red)
9. Julia (soft-haired)
10. Sister of Nereus (lamp)

Note: It is uncertain whether Junia was a man or a woman.

In regard to the particular ministry of those women, several outstanding phrases in the chapter describe in a general manner their ministry. These phrases include the following: a servant of the church (v.1), a succourer of many (v.2), my helpers in Christ Jesus (v.3), laid down their own necks (v.4), the church that is in their house (v.5), who bestowed much labour on us (v.6), who labour in the Lord (v.12), and which laboured much in the Lord (v.12).

Perhaps we could amplify the meaning of the aforementioned phrases by seeking examples of the detailed ministry of women, as set forth in I Timothy 5:10. We recognize that the context refers in particular to elderly widows, but wish to make a general application for the benefit of any exercised sister. The "good works" that are set forth, all of a practical nature, are five-fold, and could be described as follows:

1. Bringing up children, both natural and spiritual.
2. Practicing hospitality at home.
3. Ministering to the sick, which might include washing their feet or bathing them.

4. Visiting other women, particularly sisters who are needing spiritual help and consolation.
5. Practicing every good work diligently, as the need arises.

We believe that certain women were also called to special service as servants of one or other local church in apostolic times. Only one specific example is recorded, that of Phebe (Rom. 16:1,2). Also, we are aware that some brethren apply the requisites of I Timothy 3:11 only to the wives of male deacons. However, we share the opinion of others, in that a critical examination of the text suggests that certain women could be called to a special private ministry linked with a local assembly.

VI. Special Servants of the Church

Certain godly sisters can be used by the Lord in special service in their respective assemblies. Like male deacons, those women have been called and fitted by the Lord, then prepared by His Spirit for spiritual and practical ministry in connection with the local testimony to the Lord's Name. Their spiritual ministry will not include public preaching and teaching, however. That ministry represents a very important part of the service of deacons (see the author's book -Three New Testament Temples, pages 83 - 85). Nevertheless, the women can engage in an extensive variety of practical ministry, serving in temporal things. We will designate them by the unofficial term "deaconesses", and will set forth certain requisites and practical aspects of their ministry.

The Requisites

-I Timothy 3:11, 5:10

The requisites for godly women are not as numerous as those for male deacons, which appear to be seven-fold in I Timothy 3:8-10. Combining the truth set forth in the two references from I Timothy which are listed above, we would suggest that there are five general requisites for the deaconesses, as follows:

1. Worthy of respect, with serious, dignified conduct.
2. Not slanderers - they do not gossip nor reveal things which have been told them in confidence.
3. Temperate and self-controlled, with the mind well balanced.
4. Faithful in all things.
5. A testimony of good deeds practiced.

Perhaps this list could be supplemented by reference to seven general conditions which are set forth in Acts 6:3-6. The context deals with certain chosen men in the church in Jerusalem, but certainly could have wider application to either men or women who are engaged in special service for the Lord. Those conditions can be briefly summarized, as follows:

1. Not seekers of position - they had to be looked over carefully.
2. In full fellowship - they were among the saints.
3. Of good testimony - others spoke well of them.

4. Of recognized spiritual consecration - they were full of the Holy Spirit.
5. Of a discerning, wise nature - they were filled with wisdom.
6. Of a responsible character - they were to be appointed over practical business having spiritual repercussions.
7. Acceptability before the rest of the saints - the other brethren present ratified the choice.

We will now proceed to a consideration of the ministry of the deaconesses. The practical extent of their ministry will be examined and illustrated, using a variety of New Testament references.

Suggestions Regarding Their Ministry

The special ministry of the deaconesses can be categorized into five general groups, as follows: labour in the assembly, visitation, practical ministry to physical needs, hospitality in the home and teaching. Each of these five groups is considered below.

1. Labour in the Assembly

- This labour could be of a spiritual and of a practical or manual nature. Women can labour in the gospel (Phil. 4:2,3) and also render special spiritual service. For example, Phebe apparently was the carrier of the original Roman epistle (Rom. 16:1).

In manual labours, women can help care for the meeting place (cleaning, etc.) as well as serve tables on special occasions

such as conferences and social meals relating to the fellowship of the assembly. Also they could assist women who are preparing for the act of baptism, by helping them to dress, etc.

2. Visitation

- There is a constant ministry of visitation at hand. The poor and the sick are always with us, either at home or in a hospital. Many elderly people are in convalescent homes. Then there are those in prison, especially women prisoners, who might be visited, provided the situation doesn't jeopardize the testimony and safety of the visiting sisters. Finally, there are always certain sisters, particularly the elderly, who are in need of spiritual help, consolation and encouragement. Regarding visitation, we should remember that in apostolic times there was strict separation between men and women. Thus it was imperative that the deaconesses care for the sick and the poor women.

3. Practical ministry to physical needs

- As we consider the many opportunities for ministering to the physical needs of others, we are reminded of those self-denying, dedicated women mentioned in Chapter One (Section IV) who ministered to the Lord Jesus "of their substance" (Lk. 8:3). Also, we are reminded of His blessed words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Mt.

25:40). The exhortations given in Galatians 6:10 and Hebrews 13:16 impress upon us the necessity to do good unto all, especially unto fellow believers.

4. Hospitality in the home

- The New Testament Greek word which is translated "hospitality" means literally, to love strangers. In the Old Testament there are several examples of showing hospitality at home, generally accompanied by detailed descriptions. In the New Testament several instances of hospitality are mentioned, without details. During our Lord's public ministry, several homes were opened to Him in a singular manner, including Simon's home in Capernaum (Mk. 1:29-31) and Martha's home in Bethany (Lk. 10:38-42, Jn. 12:1-3). In the Acts and the epistles a number of houses were opened to the apostles and other saints, including the following: Lydia's house in Philippi (Acts 16:15); Priscilla's house in Corinth (Acts 18:3), later in Ephesus (I Cor. 16:19) and in Rome (Rom. 16:3); Apphia's house in Colosse (Phile. 22) and Gaius' house (III Jn. 5-8), which was in Corinth (assuming that he was the same Gaius mentioned in Romans 16:23).

Certain principles regarding hospitality are set forth in several New Testament passages. We will mention briefly three principles, suggesting what hospitality can very well do without, as follows: 1) without partiality - James 2:19; 2) without expecting to receive a reciprocal invitation - Luke 14:12-14; and 3) without ostentation or competition with others (inferred in general in Mt. 6:2-4). We should remember as well that there are two prohibitions regarding showing hospitality, as follows: 1) toward a fellow saint while under assembly discipline (I Cor. 5:11), and 2) toward anyone who brings erroneous doctrine (II John 9-11).

We should be reminded that one of the requisites for a true elder is to practice hospitality (I Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:8). This requisite will very definitely involve the willing cooperation of his wife. Several additional Scriptures in the New Testament also throw further light upon this very important subject of the practice of hospitality in our homes. These Scriptures are simply listed here, for the reader to examine and apply: Romans 12:13, I Corinthians 16:15, Hebrews 13:2&16 and I Peter 4:9.

5. Teaching

- There is a definite teaching ministry of sisters which does not violate the prohibitions clearly established in the apostles' doctrine (I Cor. 14:34-35, I Tim. 2:11-12). First and foremost, they should teach by example, leaving a general pattern of outward appearance, word and deed which is worthy to be imitated. In addition, there are three situations which in our estimation do not infringe upon the apostolic injunctions. In a class of children, particularly very young children of the Sunday School, a sister is often more suited than a brother to teach, provided that she qualifies in regard to the spiritual requisites. Another situation concerns teaching other women, privately. The elder sisters, in effect, are commanded to teach or stir up younger women concerning their home responsibilities (Titus 2:4,5). A godly, capable sister could recall to younger sisters some of her own personal experiences with the Lord, as well as remind them about the place and practices of the godly woman, as for example, the importance of long hair, modest dress, etc. Then there is that unusual occasion for

imparting some truth to men who are not well taught but anxious to learn. We would insist that such teaching be conducted in a private, personal manner, always in conjunction with her husband. (See the example in Acts 18:26.)

As we consider the various aspects of service of women in the church in apostolic times, we are caused to wonder about their civil status, whether single, married or widowed. This interesting facet of the life of New Testament women is considered in the next section.

VII. The Status of Women Mentioned in the New Testament

In this section we will compile a brief list of outstanding women of the New Testament, as well as examine some pointers for women from Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 7.

The Marital Status of Sixteen Notable Women of the New Testament Period

The following list reveals the outstanding contribution of women, particularly single women and widows, throughout the New Testament period. A brief summary of the ministry of each woman is set forth in Appendix IV.

1. Seven single women: Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, Martha, Dorcas, Euodias, Syntyche, and Phebe
2. Six widows: Anna, Peter's wife's mother, Mary mother of John Mark, Lydia, Lois, and the Elect lady

3. Three married women: Priscilla, Eunice, and Apphia

Note: Several assumptions have been made in the above lists. In addition, Eunice might have been widowed before Paul wrote his epistles to Timothy.

The above examples of useful New Testament women seem to weigh heavily in favour of single women and widows. We will consider the teaching that the apostle delivered to the Corinthians.

The Potential of Single Women versus Married Women, from I Corinthians 7

A portion of the teaching from I Corinthians 7 is summarized below, with emphasis placed upon ten salient points, as follows:

1. Paul states his personal advice, that it is good to remain single - v.7,8.
2. The sister who has chosen to remain single for the Lord's sake has a gift or ability (Divinely-given) to live wholly separated, set apart in body and spirit -v. 32-34.
3. It is better to marry if one cannot control his or her desires and passions -v. 9.
4. There is no special commandment from the Lord - v. 25.
5. An apostolic command is set forth, to remain in the state in which one is found - v. 26,27.

6. It is not a sin to marry, in the Lord - v. 28,36,39.
7. A warning - trouble in the flesh - is connected with marriage - v. 28.
8. The contrast in desires and interests between single and married believers is portrayed - v. 32-34.
9. Two motives for remaining single are revealed in v.35:
 - a. To promote what is seemly and good order.
 - b. To secure the undivided and undistracted devotion to the Lord.
10. The determination to do better in not marrying (v. 37,38) is a demonstration of:
 - a. Standing firm in heart.
 - b. Not being forced by necessity.
 - c. Having authority over one's own will.
 - d. Maintaining a firm resolve in one's heart.

We will continue our studies by considering the influence of godly women upon the local assembly testimony. In so many situations in daily life women are the altruists, seeking the welfare of others, with unselfish concern. Toward the realization of their goals, they tend to manifest stability of character and diligence in duty. In the case of godly women, these characteristics represent qualities which will produce a stabilizing effect upon the local assembly.

VIII. The Stability of Godly Women

A beautiful illustration of stability coupled with spiritual beauty is given in

Psalm 144:12, "our daughters as corner stones, polished...." It is remarkable that they are compared to corner stones, when we consider that the Chief Corner Stone of the universal church is Christ alone (Isa. 28:16, Eph. 2:20, I Pet. 2:6). In effect, godly sisters can impart that essential corner stability to the local assembly. Their steadfastness is indispensable for strengthening "the things which remain" (Rev. 3:2). It will be manifested in their consistent testimony and confident hope in the Lord.

Their Consistent Testimony

Like Enoch, a godly sister can determine above all to please God (Heb. 11:5). This determination will evoke the admiration of spiritual brethren and the respect of all. Even an unbelieving man, outwardly opposed to the Truth, is duly impressed by the chaste, submissive conduct of his wife (I Pet. 3:2).

The testimony of Enoch and others who are included in the "Gallery of Faith" in Hebrews 11 was vitally linked with their faith. They obtained "a good report through faith" (Heb. 11:39). Vital to the faith of each godly saint are three basic roots, as follows:

1. Convictions - firmly rooted in the Word of God.
2. Concessions - a yielding or handing over of the will to the Lord.
3. Conduct - in accordance with the convictions and the handing over of the will to Himself.

Their Confident Hope

The hope of godly sisters can be expressed in three respects, as follows:

1. Attraction - to Christ Himself, revealed in a desire to see Him (I Pet. 1:8) and to be like Him (I Jn. 3:2), Who is the "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).
2. Anticipation - or expectation of His return at any moment (Rev. 22:7), which should produce confidence (Heb. 10:35-37) and consolation (Heb. 6:18).
3. Aspiration - or ambition and incentive toward diligence (Heb. 6:11-12) and purity (I Jn. 3:3).

We will conclude our studies of godly women in the assembly by considering the history of the most influential woman in the congregation of Israel during their wilderness wanderings.

A unique God-fearing couple in that congregation despised and oppressed in Egypt, produced three outstanding leaders: Moses, Aaron and Miriam. The oldest one, Miriam, like her younger brothers, displayed qualities of responsibility and leadership throughout her life. At an early age she demonstrated a responsible attitude and an intelligent response while caring for her baby brother Moses. Later in life she was called of the Lord to be a prophetess, the first one named in the Bible. Well over 90 years of age, perhaps nearing 100 when Israel crossed the Red Sea, she led the women in a chant of victory.

However, later on, at an advanced age, she manifested a proud and somewhat

domineering character. Motivated by jealousy, she enlisted the help of her brother Aaron to undermine the authority given by the Lord to the youngest brother Moses. Her history reveals the potential of women who have a rich spiritual heritage, having been raised by devout parents. At the same time, it reveals certain dangers of presumption and self-importance which could eventually tarnish their reputation and render their testimony ineffectual.

IX. Summary of the History of Miriam

Referring to three chapters from two books of the Pentateuch, we will consider the story of Miriam under five headings; namely, her care, her chant, her criticism, her chastening and her cure.

Her Care for the Future Leader

-Exodus 2:4, 7-8

As a young woman, Miriam displayed a responsible attitude, with diligence and devotion. We have concluded that she is the sister mentioned in the reference above. See also Numbers 26:59.

Her Chant of Rejoicing

-Exodus 15:20-21

The first song of the Bible, a song of redemption of God's earthly people, occupies first place in the order of events after Pharaoh's hosts were drowned and the people of God had been delivered. Immediately following the singing of that song by all the congregation, Miriam led all the women in a brief chorus to extol the Lord, recounting His great triumph over the enemy. The same

passage also identifies her as the prophetess, the first one mentioned in the Bible.

Her Criticism of the Lord's Servant

-Numbers 12:1-2

Shortly before her death, at an advanced age, Miriam revealed an unfortunate development in her strong character and qualities of leadership which had been so useful earlier in her service for the Lord. Self-conceit was beginning to master her, causing her to overestimate her importance and forget her place. As the older sister of Moses she considered herself to be at least on the same level of authority. Overcome by jealousy, she displayed a rather proud, domineering attitude in manipulating her pliable younger brother Aaron, who was Moses senior by three years. United in their criticism of Moses, they began to undermine the Divinely-entrusted authority and were endangering the unity and future of God's chosen people. In fact, this rebellion by Miriam and Aaron was the first of three rebellions which are found progressively in the book of Numbers, as follows: a rebellion by family members in chapter 12, by the congregation in chapter 14 and by a relative in chapter 16.

Not surprisingly, the matter had begun over a domestic issue, Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian. In all likelihood, Miriam justified her intrusion into her youngest brother's personal affairs, condemning his marriage on at least four counts: 1) The Lord's business concerning His people should have occupied all his time and interests; 2) If this were Moses' second marriage, as some believe, then why did he have to marry again when she hadn't even married for the first time; 3) Surely there were a number of Israelite women who would have been pleased to

marry him; and 4) Why did he have to marry a foreigner? This was a poor example for the leader to set before God's separated people.

The reaction of Moses in the midst of this crisis is very commendable. He remained calm, quiet and not disposed to defend himself nor his rights. In reality, he demonstrated exactly what the epistles teach in regard to the conduct of godly women in I Peter 3, I Timothy 2, etc.). Moses later reminded the children of Israel of this event (Dent. 24:9).

Her Chastening
-Numbers 12:4-10

Divine chastening was very swift in coming. It is very important to note the Divine estimation of Moses. He was the undisputed leader, chosen by the Lord, with a position higher than any prophet. The Lord spoke to him like unto none other, not by visions or dreams, but face to face as to a most faithful friend. It is very significant that this Divine estimation is repeated in the New Testament (Heb. 3:2-5) where Moses is compared with Christ and His superior qualities. In reality, Moses was a type of the coming Mediator. Therefore to dishonour him was in effect to dishonour the promised Messiah.

What a sad state in which Miriam found herself, greatly humbled, instantly stricken with leprosy, that horrible disease which was dreaded, debilitating and degrading. No longer honoured as the prophetess and leader of the chorus, she was expelled from the camp. Instead of singing gloriously, she must hoarsely shout, "Unclean, unclean" (Lev. 13:45,46) if anyone approached her lonely forsaken habitation.

Her Cure
- Numbers 12:11-15

Aaron immediately identified himself with Miriam in the sin committed. He did not hesitate in calling Moses, "my lord". His words reveal his humbled attitude, acknowledgement of Moses' calling and confession of his own sin, coupled with an impassioned plea for his older sister. However, he could not intercede for her before the Lord, even though he was the ordained high priest. His complicity with his sister had rendered him incompetent for this ministry. Moses must intercede. It is significant that Moses did not reprove his sister nor express any opinion regarding the severity of the judgment. Her sentence was reduced from lifelong banishment to a seven-day quarantine period outside the camp. The Lord emphasized the seriousness of her sin, as being shameful and publicly degrading, like a father spitting in the child's face.

The story of Miriam ends rather abruptly. Her death and burial in Kadesh are briefly mentioned in Numbers 20:1. Apparently there was no mourning for her, simply her burial. Further on, in Micah 6:4, her name is inserted along with her brothers' names. The New Testament contains no reference to her.

A number of spiritual lessons can be gathered from the foregoing. First of all, the intrusion into the personal affairs of other believers and judging of their motives will debilitate us spiritually and lead to humbling experiences. As well, the authority in an assembly can be seriously undermined through destructive criticism of spiritual elders, and the offender can expect to receive judgment from the Lord. Also, a life which had formerly been lived for the Lord can be marred in testimony and cut short by

later rebellion toward the Word of God. Finally, jealousy of the place occupied by others can be devastating to our own spiritual growth and appreciation of Divine things. Truly "jealousy is cruel as the grave" (Song 8:6).

We trust that our sisters might recognize and apply these lessons which are set forth by the Spirit of God regarding Miriam. She enjoyed an unequalled position among the women in the camp of Israel, with an unusual commission given to her by the Lord.

This presented a wonderful challenge to use her position for honouring His Name. As the years passed, she allowed the center of control of her life to shift from the Lord and His plan to self and its destructive end.

Chapter Four

GODLY WOMEN IN THE HOME

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her."

Proverbs 31:10,11

The introductory verse above reveals the inestimable worth of the virtuous woman, the woman who is worthy to be admired for her righteous, chaste conduct. She is compared with the ruby, that costliest gem, and her worth is estimated as being far superior. Surely any consideration of her worth must take into account the price of her redemption, the precious blood of Christ. In gratitude to her Lord and Saviour she has set her heart upon glorifying God in her body and in her spirit (I Cor. 6:20).

In this chapter the focus is particularly on the home ministry of the married woman. We will examine different aspects of her home life, including her conduct and circle of influence. However, before proceeding further, we must recall the original relationship of the woman to her husband, after both were banished from Eden. This is revealed in the curse and its elements.

I. The Curse Pronounced upon the Woman

In considering the curse pronounced, we must not underestimate the power of Satan,

the arch-enemy of our Lord Jesus Christ. In a progressive manner, Satan deceived and tempted Eve in Genesis 3, to 1) doubt the Word of God - v.1, 2) distort the Word - v.1, 3) deny the Word - v.4, and 4) disregard the Word - v.5. He is known by at least eight names, including Satan (meaning adversary, opposer) and devil (meaning accuser), and five titles of authority, including the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2) and the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4). Although this formidable foe is powerful, his subversive authority and usurped dominion are limited. Christ has already defeated Satan through His death (Heb. 2:14), having rendered the old enemy entirely useless, to be reduced to inactivity. We can be victorious over this experienced enemy by resisting him (James 4:7), meanwhile remaining steadfast in the faith (I Pet. 5:9), through utilizing the Word of God with its accompanying spiritual armour (Eph. 6:11-18).

The Elements of the Curse
-Genesis 3:16

The curse pronounced upon the woman is found in the first 3:16 of the Bible. Thankfully, the best-known 3:16 of the New Testament, found in John's Gospel, reveals the Divine provision in Christ for the removal of that curse. The curse contains four elements as follows: her sorrow in conception would be multiplied, sorrow would accompany giving birth, subjection to her husband would be her desire, and he would have the rule over his wife. The sorrow in conceiving perhaps refers to the conscious realization of having passed on a fallen, sinful nature to each new creature.

The sorrow in giving birth might refer to the travail, or pain in giving birth. Then the underlying desire of the woman, placed in her heart by the Lord, was

to be of a subject nature. Finally, the husband would rule over his wife from that moment on. The word "rule" (Heb. in this verse means to make to have over, to govern, to have power. word is also found in Genesis 1:18, - mashal) dominion The same 4:7, etc.

Lest anyone feel that the woman received a disproportionate curse load, we will comment on Adam's curse. That curse in its entirety included seven aspects, all found in Genesis 3, as follows: sorrowing throughout life - v.17, the budding of thorns and thistles - v.18, partaking of the herb of the field - v.18, toiling in the sweat of his face - v.19, returning to dust - v.19, driven out from the Lord's planted garden - v.24, and a turning flaming sword - v.24. It is interesting to compare each of these elements with the sufferings borne by the Saviour, Who was made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13).

As expected, the Divine curse placed upon the man and the woman has been accompanied by a number of personal conflicts. Some of the most outstanding couples mentioned in the Old Testament experienced marital conflicts of one nature or another. Thankfully, the same Word of God which reveals the curse also contains the solution to any and every problem. It is necessary, however, to avail oneself of the counsel offered in the Word of God.

II. Conflicts and Counsel in Marriage

We are aware that even in the most ideal marriages there will at times arise some matter which will result in disagreement or even controversy between the husband and wife. Immediately the need arises to

confront the situation and seek a solution promptly in order to preserve marital harmony before the Lord and a good testimony before others. We will suggest some simple basic steps to follow toward that end.

Progressive Steps Toward a Solution

1. Acknowledge that some difficulty exists, perhaps revealed by barriers in communication.
2. Define the problem. This is necessary before proceeding toward a solution.
3. Seek help from creditable sources. These will be considered below, on the basis of their merits.

There are a number of sources for help which are offered in the Christian world today. We will suggest several of the most popular ones.

Popular Sources of Spiritual Help

Four of the most popular sources of help are listed below, along with our personal opinion regarding each one.

1. Christian books, fiction and non-fiction
 - Novels, including Christian novels, are not recommended, since the setting is fictitious and the characters are often ideal, lacking realism. Some Christian books might be of some help, but should be chosen very carefully. If the author emphasizes his own strategy and case histories rather than the Word of God, his works should be avoided.

2. Christian radio programs

- Generally entertaining, some well-known Christian radio programs might offer some practical points which could be helpful. However, if analyzed in depth, they are frequently lacking in basic Scriptural solutions. The emphasis is often placed upon introspective analysis, with little or nothing of Christ. Furthermore, we wonder if a fairly large percentage of popular radio and television preachers might be retaining some erroneous doctrine regarding the Name, Person and work of Christ.

3. Popular books and magazines

- Much reading material, such as women's magazines, presents the stories of professional women as role models, advertising new life styles and "liberated" attitudes for married women. In our estimation, the true life story of those women, if revealed, would be a sad expose of dissatisfaction and frustration rather than glamorized magazine reports. Regarding professionally prepared books, there is a tendency among some authors, such as psychologists, to give a purely professional analysis from a humanistic viewpoint.

4. Professional counselling

- An increasingly popular trend today is to seek professional help from a marriage counsellor or psychiatrist. Certainly there are distinct behaviour patterns and mental states which can be identified by psychologists and psychiatrists. However, there are also novel, non-Biblical diagnoses and solutions which are captivating a wide audience. We consider it

unlikely that an unbelieving professional would give personal advice which is Bible-based, or even compatible in some measure with the Word of God. Even a "Christian counsellor" might be swayed by current trends. Therefore, in our estimation, a believer should be very reluctant to solicit the help of marriage counsellors, and that only after exhausting the possibility of obtaining sound advice from mature, godly saints. The words of I Corinthians 6:5 are poignant with meaning -- "Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you?" If the situation demands a professional assessment, the spiritual credentials of the psychiatrist should be investigated beforehand.

Permanent Solutions, from the Word of God

The only infallible source of counsel, which will provide a lasting solution to any problem, involves the Word of God coupled with prevailing prayer. It is quite certain that if a sister is seriously searching the Word for a solution to any problem, she will learn to cast her burden upon the Lord.

We will list five outstanding references from the apostles doctrine, each one linked with marital life. The particular theme of each references is briefly summarized.

1. I Corinthians 7:2-4 - As one flesh with her husband, the wife gives herself unreservedly to him, demonstrating her deepest love for him and united attitude of heart with him.
2. Ephesians 5:22-24,33 - In every aspect of married life, the wife is subject to her husband, the head, and reverences him. This subjection is linked with the spiritual subjection of the church to Christ.

3. I Timothy 5:14 - As homemaker, the wife manages and directs household affairs, under the authority of her husband.
4. Titus 2:4-5 - As home keeper, the wife seeks her fulfillment in maintaining her own home. She manifests a teachable spirit, and can be influenced for good by the example and personal instruction given by godly older sisters.
5. I Peter 3:1-6 - As a "daughter of Sarah," the wife maintains a meek and quiet spirit, in subjection unto her husband. This will be evidenced by a chaste, respectful attitude, which can be utilized by the Spirit of God to convince even an opposed, unbelieving husband.

The Word of God presents the only lasting solution to problems which arise in the home or elsewhere. It is fully up-to-date, and furthermore, contains the plan and mind of the Creator. Many problems which frequently arise between married couples would not have existed if the Word had been read and applied. While the Scriptures contain a substantial quantity of teaching directed to husbands, we will limit our study to the teaching regarding the conduct of the wife in the home.

III. The Conduct of the Godly Wife

Two underlying themes are developed in our doctrinal studies; namely, subjection to the authority of the Lord, and self-restraint for His glory. These themes are accentuated as we consider the conduct of the godly wife in I Peter 3:1-6.

Subjection, to the Authority
of Her Husband and of the Lord

-I Peter 3:1,2

This subjection, which is certainly honouring to God, will most definitely contribute toward the stability and order of the home, the harmony and security of the household. It essentially involves obedience with a submissive attitude, and basically is not dependent upon the husband's reciprocal conduct. In accordance with the context, it will be manifested in the following manner:

1. Quiet demeanor - her daily Christlike conduct, in contrast to complaining or even preaching sermonettes, is that which will slowly gain the respect of even a husband who is opposed to the truth.
2. Chaste conduct - this is something beautiful for any husband, particularly the unbeliever, to behold, or critically examine with the eye. Her meek character and virtuous manner will favourably impress even the most difficult husband.
3. Respectful fear -- that is, the fear of offending the Lord, and unduly displeasing her husband. It does not imply any terror regarding what evil deeds an unbelieving husband is capable of doing. (See also Eph 5:33 - "that she reverence her husband".)

The succeeding three verses of the chapter reveal the second underlying theme.

Self-Restraint, for His Glory

-I Peter 3:3-5

This portion of the chapter clearly reveals that the outward appearance is simply a

reflection of inward attitudes and thoughts. The tranquil, reserved woman will radiate an air of serenity and peace. Likewise, inner conflicts will undoubtedly be exhibited outwardly, in some measure. We will examine the substance of the three verses in the following brief summary, which includes the outward appearance, the inward adorning and the spirit in its true character and qualities.

1. The outward appearance - she is not to seek personal glory, striving to be seen and admired. The outward adorning which is disapproved includes the following:
 - a. Plaiting the hair - intertwining it in an ornamental fashion.
 - b. Wearing of gold - apparently this refers to gold ornaments, placed around the body and clothing for decoration.
 - c. Putting on of apparel - with reference to an ostentatious garment (Gr. - himation, meaning an outer garment, cloak or mantle). Modest apparel, in price and style, does not necessarily mean frugal simplicity nor shabbiness, much less carelessness toward the appearance. Rather, as revealed in I Timothy 2:9, the word "modest" means orderly, well-arranged and decent. The word "apparel" means a garment let down, in its original significance. (See also Chapter 5, Section II.)
2. The inward adornment, which is not corruptible - this is undecaying, in essence and continuance. The godly woman's character becomes more lovely with the passing of years. The ornament is spiritual, concealed in her heart, continually polished by the Divine hand.

3. The spirit - this innermost part of her being, the part which has been quickened by the Spirit of God, is meek and tranquil, nourished by Divine streams of blessing. Meekness is definitely not weakness, but rather the fruit of spiritual power given by the Lord, to not be self-assertive and self-interested. The final verse of this exhortation to godly women contains a unique phrase which might be termed "daughters of Sarah". The apostle Peter makes reference to Sarah's submissive attitude toward Abraham, and the honour which she accorded him, calling him "lord". Apparently he is referring to the only occasion in Scripture when Sarah used that title, in Genesis 18:12. On that occasion, at the advanced age of 89 years, she was inwardly laughing in unbelief at the Lord's announcement to her husband that she would bear him a son in her old age. Despite her unbelief and disparaging thoughts toward the Lord's promises given to Abraham, she is now commended by the Spirit of God for the subjection and honour shown toward her husband.

Surely a godly wife, seeking by God's grace to live in accordance with the truth just set forth, will leave many impressions for good and thus adorn the doctrine. Her positive influence will not only permeate her own household, but will undoubtedly extend well beyond the confines of her home.

IV. The Circle of Influence of the Pious Wife

We will present two outline studies from the Old Testament, both revealing how the godly wife, along with her husband, can

maintain a good testimony and truly positive influence, with blessing flowing out to others. At the same time she will be spiritually enriched as she serves the Lord, reaching out to the needy in her daily ministry. Her spiritual qualities will be displayed in the searchlight of the Word of God, reflecting beams of spiritual light like a polished gemstone.

Blessing Flowing Out to Others

-_Psalm 128

The outline study below reveals the multiple benefits and blessings which accrue to the couple whose heart is set upon living for Christ, in the fear of the Lord.

1. Consistent walk of the husband (v.1)
- with godly character and instruction for his family.
2. Honest labour of both (v.2) - with happiness and well-being.
3. Submissive attitude of the wife (v.3)
- spiritually fruitful and guarding the home.
4. Obedient children (v.3) - honouring and supporting their parents.
5. Ministry to others (v.5) - with hospitality and good works.
6. Satisfying long life (v.6) - with spiritual and material heritage.
7. Peacable home (v.6) - with godliness and contentment.

Not only is the godly wife a blessing to others. She is being spiritually enriched at the same time, with infinite blessings multiplying in her own soul as the principles of the Word of God are reflected in practice. Her qualities, shining forth under the light of the Word, will produce a similar effect as the dazzling luster of rich red color displayed by the ruby, that rarest and costliest of gems. Thus certain practical results of the redemptive work of Christ, requiring the shedding of His precious blood, are displayed before the world in general. The qualities of the virtuous woman, all found in that unique alphabet acrostic of Proverbs 31:10-31 (22 verses, each beginning with a consecutive letter of the 22-letter Hebrew alphabet), are briefly examined here.

The Virtuous Woman and
Ten Outstanding Elements
-Proverbs 31:10-31

1. Her price - v.10
 - Her worth is far superior to rubies, which are highly valued as gems and as jeweled bearings.
2. Her husband - v.11, 12, 23, 28
 - He trusts and praises her. Also, he confides in her industriousness and integrity.
3. Her children - v.28
 - They reverence and bless her.
 - Note: She has already given guidance and counsel to her children, in seven aspects
 - Prov. 31:3-9.
4. Her household - v.15, 27
 - They appreciate her self-sacrificing care and personal interest in their welfare.

5. Her hands - v.13, 16, 19, 20
- She is constantly occupied in willing labour, seeking, sowing, spinning and supplying the needs of others.
6. Her management - v.14, 16, 18, 24 - She manifests diligence and discretion in planning and performing, buying and selling.
7. Her clothing - v.17, 21, 22, 25 - Her enduring virtues of strength of character and honour can be admired.
8. Her candle - v.18
- Her lamp of personal testimony is burning constantly, with the wick trimmed and the oil supply renewed.
9. Her words - v.26 - She speaks with wisdom and kindness.
10. Her renown - v. 31
- She is widely known for her spiritual and moral comeliness, is worthy to be praised, and will be abundantly rewarded for her God-fearing attitude and righteous deeds.

Throughout this chapter on the godly woman in the home, we have emphasized in particular the married woman, whose life and activities should center around the home and domestic duties. Therefore we consider it important to include a section on marriage considerations, particularly for the benefit of young women who are contemplating marriage. However, in no way are we suggesting that a sister in Christ should go out looking for a life partner. The risks of marrying out of the mind of the Lord, with all its consequences, are greatly increased by setting the heart on marriage at all costs

rather than waiting upon the Lord, according to His will and in His time.

V. Considerations and Counsel Regarding Marriage

In this section we will develop some general thoughts regarding marriage from both the Old Testament and New Testament. A well-known story from Genesis provides a real-life experience from which to extract lessons. Then the apostolic teaching in the New Testament, along with practical considerations, can be combined in an effort to help orient those who are contemplating marriage, as well as remind those who are already married of the implications. We will begin by examining some outstanding phrases found in Genesis 24.

Marriage Considerations Revealed in Genesis 24

In the story of Rebekah, found in Genesis 24, a number of basic lessons are suggested which can be of considerable help to young people who are anticipating marriage. Several of them are listed below, as follows: the valuable counsel of parents- v.2; the unequal yoke condemned - v.3; the life partner to be chosen from among the same spiritual people v.4; special prayer before proceeding v.12-14; waiting beside the fountain, a figure of the refreshing Word of God - v.13; the Word of God put to the test - v.16; purity and a likeable personality revealed in the young woman - v.16; her desirable characteristics, including being attentive and a willing worker - v.18-20; the patient waiting for Divine direction - v.21; the hospitable spirit manifested in the young woman - v.25; the Lord was worshipped and His Name was honoured throughout - v.26-27.

Surely it was a blessed occasion when, after traveling the long, weary journey across the desert and listening to the servant describe his master to her, Rebekah was joyfully received by Isaac. The spiritual implications of these scenes are obvious, as we contemplate being caught up at any moment, and seeing face-to-face Him who loved us and gave Himself for us (Eph. 5:25, Rev. 1:5, etc.). Meanwhile we are to be occupied in His business until He comes (Lk. 19:13). This does not preclude marriage during the interval, provided the Lord's claims are honoured. We will examine the implications of a very important phrase found in I Corinthians 7.

Implications of the Phrase "In the Lord"

-I Corinthians 7:39

This short phrase implies much more than appears at first glance, in regard to marriage which the Lord approves. We will begin with a basic assumption regarding the couple, that they truly love each other. This implies a mutual affection, appreciation and admiration one of the other. Love is not simply a physical or sexual attraction. It demands a willingness to give, to sacrifice oneself for the other. We will proceed to develop and amplify four considerations in an effort to better understand the phrase "in the Lord".

1. Both are saved, with clear evidence of salvation, as revealed in spiritual fruit in their lives. If there is any doubt about spiritual life being present in one, then the other is specifically warned against proceeding into a possible unequal yoke (II Cor. 6:14).
2. Each one has demonstrated consistent spiritual character over a period of

time. Neither one would be classified as a "carnal" believer (I Cor. 3:1-3). The spiritual character is manifested by continuous participation in the fellowship of the assembly and a consecrated life in serving the Lord.

3. They have seen distinct evidence of the Lord's good hand, leading them along and encouraging them to join their lives together. (See Gen. 24:27, etc.)
4. They are compatible in various spheres, as follows:
 - a. Cultural/Social
 - In background and habits, there is a similarity in the past history of each, which would help to avoid marital conflicts later on. We must also face the issue of racial differences, recognizing that although a young couple might consider themselves compatible, their parents and relatives might have different thoughts, and their children will likely suffer some discrimination in the future.
 - b. Intellectual/Educational
 - The ability of the husband and wife to understand one another and to communicate with each other is most essential in marriage. Their intellectual and educational levels could perhaps affect their level of communication, although other factors, of an emotional and sentimental nature, will undoubtedly influence as well.
 - c. Physical/Mental
 - The state of health, both physical and mental, of each one will definitely have an effect upon their marriage relationship. Any aberration in either

one should be seriously studied and the consequences weighed before they enter into marriage.

Note: The three points above suggest factors which, in the case of extreme differences, could give rise to major conflicts unless the couple is willing and able to recognize and accept those differences.

We will continue our studies in this section with some very practical considerations of a personal nature, particularly for young people.

Practical Considerations Regarding Maturity and Responsibility in Marriage

The suitable age for marriage is a difficult matter to define, and involves a number of complex factors. Let us consider four basic factors below.

1. Mental maturity of each one.

- A mature outlook on life, and willingness to accept responsibility, are essential elements for living together compatibly.

2. Biological development of each one.

- Although women in general are biologically capable of reproduction even in the early teen years, the optimal period of their life for bearing children encompasses the twenties and early thirties. Furthermore, it is questionable whether they are emotionally prepared for the experiences and responsibility of motherhood (and fatherhood, as well) before the

early twenties. These factors underscore the inadvisability of marrying very young, including persons in their late teens.

3. Spiritual development and maturity.

- Youth is a unique period in our lives when we enjoy greater energy and vigor, better memory, uncluttered minds, etc. The early years of youth could best be used for the Lord by purposely remaining single, in order to devote time without distraction to reading and studying the Bible, growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. As well, opportunities abound for serving Christ through personal witnessing, preaching the Gospel, etc. The Lord should receive the best years, the firstfruits of our life. A young man or woman can later enter marriage feeling more spiritually enriched, expecting to receive greater spiritual blessings upon their life together.

4. Economic responsibility of the husband.

- Upon marrying, a man assumes a lifetime obligation before the Lord to provide for the material needs of his wife, and for the children until they become adults. If he defaults, his personal testimony and the assembly testimony will suffer (see I Tim. 5:8, etc.). If a couple begins married life with financial instability, their many legitimate adjustments to marriage will be compounded by a basic struggle to survive. The natural outcome will be marital wrangling. A young man or woman contemplating marriage should be financially solvent, without a list of creditors to satisfy.

The foregoing factors would emphasize the importance of seeking counsel from others who are qualified to give a mature opinion, based upon the Word of God and their own personal observations. That is the theme of the last study in this section.

Counsel from Godly Saints

Certainly some knowledge can be gained by reading and studying books. However, true wisdom only comes from above, and is to be distinguished from simple knowledge, as revealed in Proverbs 9:10, etc. As well, understanding is that insight or perception which is acquired through years of experience during which one learns to apply truths and principles memorized perhaps many years before.

Therefore we cannot overestimate the value of seeking counsel from older, mature saints. Apart from the parents of a young couple, spiritual elders come to the foreground as the logical source of counsel and sound advice. In addition, some godly, mature sisters could be of special help to young women who are contemplating marriage or are already wives and mothers. Furthermore, they have received a Divinely-given responsibility to teach the younger women practical and domestic responsibilities, in a private way. See Titus 2:3-5.

We might add that all the foregoing will Not automatically guarantee a successful marriage. After the excitement of the marriage ceremony has subsided, and the novelty of living together becomes a daily reality, each one will recognize the need to put forth personal, prayerful effort. "Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh" (I Cor. 7:28).

We will conclude our studies on godly women in the home by considering the story of a "great woman", the unnamed Shunamite, of whom we have only two brief glimpses in one book, II Kings chapters 4 and 8. This remarkable woman lived in relative obscurity in the small town of Shunem in the time of Elisha the prophet. Geographically, the site of Shunem is not far from Nain, a town which assumed importance around 900 years later when Jesus raised a widow's son from death.

VI. The Shunamite, a Great Woman in her Home

The story of the Shunamite woman is unique, first in its content but also in its interrupted sequence, in II Kings chapters 4 and 8. The intermediate chapters contain several incidents involving the Syrian army, the first of which reveals that "great man" Naaman, in II Kings 5. Not many great men are mentioned in the Scriptures, and none of them could ever compare with the Lord Jesus, Who is greater than all; Solomon, Jonah (Mt. 12:41,42) and the rest of humanity all combined. Surely there were outstanding women of old, some even named and others inferred in Hebrews 11. Adjectives are used to describe some of them in general, such as virtuous (Prov. 31:10), devout and honourable (Acts 13:50, 17:12) and chief (Acts 17:5). However, the Shunamite is the only woman in the Bible who is specifically called "great". Her story is linked with a great prophet, Elisha. She was neither a ruler nor a prophetess, nor were there great crises in Israel as in the time of certain prophetesses like Miriam and Deborah, for example. Rather, she demonstrated greatness of character in the routine events of daily life.

What was the source of her greatness? Certainly it wasn't the obscure town of Shunem (meaning "their sleep"), located opposite Mount Gilboa and belonging to the inheritance allotted to the tribe of Issachar (Josh. 19:18). Consider her situation for a moment -- a relatively young woman married to an older man, childless, and likely much better off financially than the widow woman who appears at the beginning of the chapter. She could have succumbed to self-pity, or sought renown in one way or another. She did neither. We might describe her as a devout, honourable woman, leading a consistent home-centered life directed toward helping others.

Her greatness was displayed in three areas, as follows: in aspects of daily life in a small town, in actions rather than many words, and in her remarkable attitude of contentment. The routine aspects of daily life gave abundant opportunity for her to display her greatness. The phrase "it fell on a day" (v.8,11,18) lends a special significance to the common events in her life. Also, we would conclude that she apparently was a woman of few words, but of determined action, in the Lord's interests. However, the most commendable virtue was her attitude of contentment, considering her circumstances and the opportunity afforded to be favoured by the king. We will examine minutely the context in order to amplify our understanding of her qualities:

Great Qualities of the Shunamite

-II Kings 4:8-13

In this first chapter of her life, we wish to discover several phrases in the context which reveal her greatness of character. Seven brief points and the corresponding references are listed below.

1. Her compassionate nature - v.8.
 - She demonstrated a great concern for others, with a sincere interest in their welfare. She was a charitable woman, willing to share her material goods with others, for their benefit.
2. She constrained the prophet - v.8. - She showed great hospitality, anticipating the prophet's visits and sparing nothing as she urged him to eat at their table.
3. She comprehended his ministry - v.9.
 - She displayed great discernment of the purpose of the prophet's journeys. It is noteworthy that Shunem belonged to the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar. In the time of David, the men of Issachar were known for having "understanding of the times" (I Chron. 12:32).
4. She consulted her husband - v. 9,10.
 - She demonstrated great humility in being subject to her elderly husband. At the same time she offered original ideas, then proceeded after discussing them with him and securing his permission. See also v.22.
5. Her creative mind in action -v.10-12.
 - She devised a great plan to accommodate the prophet. First they would construct a little chamber. Then they would furnish the chamber for the prophet's comfort, as follows: a bed - for resting, a table - suggests fellowship, a stool -for study and meditation, and a candlestick - suggests enlightenment. We can only imagine how inviting was this chamber to the weary prophet in his travels. There are several chambers mentioned in the Scriptures, each one conveying a spiritual lesson.

6. She cared well for the prophet -v.13.

- She showed great care toward her distinguished visitor, providing a comfortable place for him and his servant in their frequent journeys.

7 Her contented attitude - v. 13.

- She manifested great discipline of attitude. Her unusual reply reveals the underlying reason behind her greatness, a basic contentment derived from dedicating her life to helping others. This is remarkable, considering her situation and the exceptional opportunity offered to her by the prophet. Truly "godliness with contentment is great gain" (I Tim. 6:6).

The foregoing revelations of the greatness of the Shunamite are certainly worthy of our meditation, and should be pondered and applied personally by sisters who at times might become disheartened and even discontented as they consider their home life with its daily monotony, somewhat unchallenging. We are reminded of a godly couple living in obscurity, traveling to their home in Emmaus (meaning "obscure, despised people") whose hopes and confidence were suddenly renewed and their joy unbounded, after they were joined by an unrecognized "Stranger" in the way (Luke 24:13-35).

We will proceed to the second chapter of the life of the Shunamite, which reveals her God-fearing attitude in the midst of the burdens which she was required to bear.

The Burdens of the Shunamite

-II Kings 4:14-37

As we consider this phase of her life, we must recall her ancestry. Apparently this

unnamed woman was of the tribe of Issachar, the fifth son of Leah or ninth-born son of Jacob. The father's dying blessing upon that son is most interesting, as recorded in Genesis 49:14-15. The latter part of the blessing suggests some of this woman's remarkable characteristics; namely, a restful composure, a pleasant manner and a life of service to others. As well, the blessing includes two burdens and the shoulder bent to carry them. The narrative of this woman suggests two burdens which she was required to bear.

1. The barren womb which held no child, and little hope for conceiving. She was to learn that only the Lord can make the barren woman "to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children" (Psa. 113:9). We might remind the sisters that whether married or single, each can be a mother of spiritual children. Paul the apostle even begat spiritual children while imprisoned (Phile. 10).
2. The bereaved mother which she became. Perhaps there is no grief to compare with that of a mother who has lost her child. Bathsheba must have endured a double grief, that of losing her child, and that of knowing it was the chastening hand of the Lord which caused his death. However, she was comforted by David her husband (II Sam. 12:24). Centuries later, Mary surely felt "a sword pierce through" her own soul (Lk. 2:35), as she beheld the Son lifted up to suffer upon the cross.

Regarding the Shunamite, it is remarkable to observe her composure and determination in the midst of the grief and pain she felt, upon exchanging the sadness of the barren womb for the shock of bereavement. A brief, ten-point outline of the

consecutive events in this second chapter in her life is set forth below.

1. Called by the prophet, she stood in the door
- v.15.
2. Conjuring him not to lie to her, she
nevertheless believed his word - v.16.
3. Conceiving according to the word of the
prophet, she later gave birth to a son,
precisely at the time indicated -v. 17.
4. Caring for her sick child until he died, she
immediately carried his body up to the bed in
the little chamber which had been prepared for
the man of God - v. 18-21.
5. Composed despite her anguished spirit, she
requested help from her husband, with the
promise of returning soon -v.22.
6. Compelling determination drove her
forward unrestrainedly - v.23,24.
7. Confident that only the man of God could help,
she briefly responded to the servant's
questions but continued on until reaching the
hill where she found him - v. 25,26.
8. Convulsed with grief, she collapsed and took
hold of his feet - v.27,28.
9. Constraining the prophet by her desperate
urgency, she moved him to follow her - v. 30.
10. Comforted and grateful, she was convinced
that the Lord was gracious -v. 36,37.

Perhaps the foregoing points might be of special comfort for some young mother, burdened down with cares, feeling a load from which she can't seem to find relief. Truly we have found eternal rest for our conscience since the moment we believed (Mt. 11:28). However, there is an additional rest, that of consecration, which the Lord promises in the succeeding verse to those who are truly yoked with Himself, with the object of learning to be true disciples. How good it is to know that the "peace of God" (Phil. 4:7) is able to guard our hearts and thoughts as we step forward, confident in the Lord's presence and promises.

If the second chapter of the Shunamite's life suggests something of her God-fearing attitude, surely the third chapter reveals the goodness of God.

The Inheritance of the Shunamite

-II Kings 8:1-6

Hard times had come upon the land of Israel, and the Shunamite woman, likely widowed, had been advised by the prophet to depart elsewhere in order not to perish in the seven-year famine which the Lord had called. She chose to travel south to the land of the Philistines. After seven years of sojourning, she returned to find that others had taken possession of her house and land. Coincidentally, at the very moment she approached the king to request that her house and lands be returned, the leprous Gehazi, ex-servant of Elisha, was recalling to the king the great miracle the prophet had wrought. The king restored unto the woman not only her house and lands, but also the fruits of the field, retroactively. Following is a simple outline of this phase of her life.

- 1 Recommendation of Elisha the prophet (v.1).
 - He warned her of the imminent famine.
2. Reaction of the woman (v.2).
 - She believed the prophet, and traveled south with her household to Philistia, where they sojourned for seven years.
- 3 Return of the woman and her household (v.3).
 - After seven years they returned home to Shunem.
4. Revelation to the king, by Gehazi (v.4,5).
 - The ex-servant of Elisha, conversing with the king, was recalling the prophet's great miracle of restoring the Shunamite's son to life.
5. Request by the woman to the king (v.3,5).
 - The account given by Gehazi to the king was dramatized at that moment by the appearance of the woman, and her son, making request for what was legally hers, the house and the land.
6. Restoration to the woman of her home, lands and fruits (v.6).
 - The king immediately responded by restoring not only her house and lands, but all the fruits of the field which had accumulated during her seven years of absence.

This three-fold inheritance suggests to us some basic spiritual lessons, as follows:

1. The house - our habitation or dwelling in fellowship with our Gathering Center, Christ, and with those meeting in His Name.

2. The lands - our retention of the truths which have been delivered to us, to be guarded and cultivated.
3. The fruits - our progression in spiritual maturity, as we grow in His likeness.

A variety of references from the New Testament could be examined to further amplify this theme and enhance our appreciation of the truth revealed.

Right to the end this woman experienced the Lord's goodness and mercy. In obedience to the prophet's urgings she had left, temporarily, her inherited possession. The coincidental circumstances which awaited her upon her return, accompanied by her son, resulted in a full three-fold restoration, with retroactive benefits. How different was the case of another sojourner, Naomi. She and her husband, fearing scarcity and trusting in themselves, had abandoned their possession in Bethlehem to sojourn in the idolatrous country of Moab. Years later, returning as a widow, minus her sons, she had to lament, "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty" (Ruth 1:21).

The contrast between these two women serves as a spiritual warning to us, in regard to the consequences of forsaking our spiritual possessions and heritage in the midst of difficult times, whether economic or spiritual. It recalls to us the Lord's warning, given earlier to Eli, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (I Sam. 2:30).

Chapter Five

GODLY WOMEN IN THE WORLD

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

Matthew 10:16

"Help those women which laboured with me in the gospel and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life."

Philippians 4:3

The two introductory verses of this chapter, although linked with different commissions, reveal how the Lord chooses the weak to complete His work. He sent forth His twelve disciples to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, emphasizing in the words quoted above the need to be prudent and pure, sensible and sincere. In this dispensation the Lord has commissioned His servants to go into all the world. In the fulfillment of the universal commission, He can utilize godly women, diligent in labouring for their Lord and Master.

There are magnificent opportunities available for spiritual women to demonstrate their pious character and practice godliness in this ungodly, corrupt world. Thus by their heart attitude, outwardly reflected in their appearance, words and deeds, they will adorn the doctrine, enhancing the intrinsic worth and workability of the truth they have believed. Their faith in action is so much more powerful than any moral speeches or

action committees. This fact is emphasized in Hebrews 11 regarding women (and men) of the past, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness ... out of weakness were made strong..." (v. 33,34).

Before progressing further with our studies in this book, we consider it essential to examine in depth the basic tenets of godliness. A foundation for the doctrine of godliness is laid in the first section.

I. The Doctrine of Godliness

The word "godliness" means a likeness to God, the supreme standard involving a right attitude of heart toward God. He is worthy of His proper place in our thoughts, our affections and our will. Thus we render to Him due reverence and respect, and the results are revealed in a steadfast character formed and a pious conduct manifested. The word "godliness" only appears in the New Testament, but the equivalent term in the Old Testament is "the fear of the Lord." For the purposes of this study we will consider the doctrine of godliness in three aspects, each one linked with the first epistle to Timothy, as follows: the progression of the topic throughout I Timothy, the pattern for godliness as revealed in I Timothy 3:16, and the profession of godliness in women as set forth in I Timothy 2.

Throughout the New Testament the word "godliness" (Gr. - "eusebeia", meaning to be well-devout) is employed 16 times, beginning with Peter's words in Acts 3:12. In the epistles the word appears four times in Second Peter, and eleven times in Paul's epistles. Nine of Paul's references are found in

one epistle alone, First Timothy. The recurrence of the theme throughout that one epistle is considered below.

The Progression of Godliness through
the First Epistle to Timothy

Apart from two additional references (II Tim. 3:5 and Titus 1), the theme of godliness in Paul's epistles is concentrated in I Timothy. The nine references are briefly summarized below, with the chapter and verse included:

1. Peacefulness of godliness - 2:2
2. Profession of godliness - 2:10
3. Personification of godliness - 3:16
4. Practice of godliness - 4:7
5. Profitability of godliness - 4:8
6. Principles of godliness - 6:3
7. Presumption of godliness - 6:5
8. Pleasure of godliness - 6:6
9. Perseverance in godliness - 6:11

The Pattern for Godliness,
Revealed in Christ
- I Timothy 3:16

The Pattern, or what might be termed Personification of godliness, is found in one of the outstanding 3:16's of the Bible - I Timothy 3:16. This is the third reference by Paul to the theme of godliness in the epistle. This reference reveals the only source or perfect pattern for godliness, Christ Himself, displayed in six rhythmical, balanced phrases, set forth in three groups which are arranged in juxtaposition. Every aspect of godliness is unfolded in the movements of Him Who is God incarnate, from His simplicity in the manger to His sovereignty upon the throne. The standard for our

conduct is thus established in the Person and perfections of Christ.

The simple chart below sets forth the truths of the "Mystery of Godliness", as the plan unfolds in alternating fashion between the earthly (E) and the heavenly (H) realms.

1. Deity manifested
(E) - Incarnation, in His birth and life.
(H) - Vindication, in His resurrection.
2. Deity recognized
(H) - Ascension and Exaltation, of the triumphant Lord.
(E) - Proclamation, or heralding world-wide, of His saving power.
3. Deity acknowledged
(E) - Believing Faith, in the unseen Christ.
(H) - Welcome and Enthronement, in the brightness of the glory of God.

The above truths, revealing the true essence of godliness, should inspire each saint to strive to glory only in Christ, emulate Christ and proclaim Christ daily. We can glory in His wonderful Name, His blessed Person and His redemptive work. We can emulate Him, seeking to follow His steps (I Pet. 2:21). We can proclaim His saving power, which can be operational in the hearts and lives of others.

The Profession of Godliness in Women

It is most interesting that one of the first of eleven references by Paul to godliness is linked with the appearance and conduct of pious women, in I Timothy 2:10. In

particular, their outward appearance is on display continuously, and is directly linked with godly living. Obviously, the thought goes much deeper than simply the outward appearance and conduct. Godliness involves the attitude of heart of the godly sister.

The word "professing" (I Tim. 2:10) suggests a proclamation to fulfill, a promise to do. Therefore her attitude of heart toward God is right, and her manner of life will be displayed by her appearance outwardly and her commendable conduct filled with good works, in fulfillment of Ephesians 2:10.

II. Distinguishing Features of the Godly Woman

The subject of women professing godliness in I Timothy 2 also includes certain distinguishing features, in verses 9 through 12. These features are considered below in accordance with the two underlying themes introduced in Chapter 2; namely, subjection to His authority and self-restraint for His glory.

Self-Restraint, for His Glory

-I Timothy 2:9,10

These two verses suggest two aspects of her self-restraint in action, in her adornment and in her determination. The two aspects are summarized below.

1. Her adornment

- a. Modest apparel - The word "modest" (Gr. - kosmos) means orderly, well-arranged and decent. It involves not only the woman's dress, but deportment

as well, including her appearance and manner of wearing her clothing. She does not look slovenly, but neither is she imitating the mod(ern) look. The word "apparel" (Gr. - katastole) means primarily, a garment let down.

b. Shame-fastness - This compound word refers to that self-respect which shrinks, in moral revulsion, from all that is immodest and unseemly. It is modesty which is fast or rooted in the character.

C. Sobriety - The word signifies that habitual inner self-government, with constant rein on the passions and desires, which produces a well-balanced state of mind.

2. Her determination to practice the Word, with conviction, not following the world, with its changing fashions. These convictions will require definite answers, found in the context and amplified below.

a. No - to elaborate hair styles, including broidered hair, produced by plaiting and braiding the hair.

b. No - to gold, or pearls, whether ornaments on the body or intertwined in the hair.

c. No - to costly raiment.

d. Yes - to good works, that is, deeds that are morally good, honouring to God and beneficial to others. The good works might require expenditures which could involve sacrifice and self-denial, but will most certainly enrich her spiritually forever. In contrast, the spending of material

wealth for the adulation of self will result in total impoverishment, both materially and spiritually.

It is true that economic standards vary greatly from one country to another. This will be reflected to some degree in the amount of money that sisters spend, and in the quality of their clothing. Notwithstanding, it is quite possible that they could place undue emphasis on costly clothing, apparently in defiance of the Scripture under consideration. Plain clothing perhaps is rather out of style today, just as plain living is becoming a rarity in any country. Certainly we should look our best, regarding neatness and cleanliness. Surely the Lord is worthy of all. But does this suggest the finest available, as though cost of that which enhances our personal glory were the main consideration?

Our thinking might be brought into proper focus by contemplating the attitude of heart of certain consecrated saints. In the Old Testament, David prepared with all his heart and might for the Lord's house, knowing that it would be built by another. (See I Chronicles 22:14.) In the New Testament, the Macedonian saints truly impoverished themselves, in the midst of much tribulation and poverty, in order to give more abundantly for the work of the Lord (II Cor. 8:1-5). The secret of their exceeding generosity is expressed so beautifully -- "They first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us..."

Subjection, to the Authority of the Lord

-I Timothy 2:11,12

These two verses, besides twice emphasizing the quiet spirit of the woman, also include a word of encouragement and an

enjoinder. The contents of the verses are set forth in four points, as follows:

1. Her quietness - the word "silence" could be expressed by "quietness." It implies tranquility or stillness which is characteristic of the person's inner nature or spirit. In other N.T. references, a derivative of the Greek word essentially means to be silent or cease from speaking. Incidentally, this word "silence" (Gr. - hesuchia) is more comprehensive than a different Greek word, also translated "silence", in I Corinthians 14:28 and 34. There it means to hush, hold one's peace, or voluntarily refuse to speak.
2. Her encouragement - to go on learning, as a disciple, attentively listening and observing.
3. Her enjoinder - to not teach, nor exercise dominion over the man.
4. Her silence - evidencing a willing acceptance of her quiet role.

The double emphasis of the apostolic injunction regarding the woman's quiet role is immediately followed by a double explanation, in verses 13 and 14, as follows:

- a. Divine sovereignty is absolute. By Divine choice, Adam was first in creation.
- b. Human responsibility must be acknowledged. The woman Eve was first in the transgression.

With a foundation laid in the first two sections of this chapter on the subject of godliness as set forth in I Timothy, we can now proceed to practical considerations regarding the manifestation of godliness in the daily life of the spiritual woman in this world.

III. Demonstration of Godliness in Daily Life

This section will be considered in two aspects, the practice of godliness and the perseverance in godliness.

The Practice of Godliness -Titus 2:4,5

The theme of Titus 2 concerns the "things which become sound doctrine" (v.1); that is, practical daily living which is suitable or proper, in alignment with the doctrine. Seven distinct groups are exhorted throughout the chapter regarding their conduct, with the object of adorning "the doctrine in all things" (v.10). The most extensive list of exhortations is directed toward the young married women (v.4,5), and consists of seven points in the original. These exhortations are so important that a failure in any one might cause the Word of God to be blasphemed, that is, spoken evil of, or reviled. We consider it important to list and define them, particularly for the benefit of young married sisters in their testimony before the world.

1. Marital love - the husband should be first in her affections in the home circle. It is understood that her love for the Lord should supersede and outshine all others, whether persons or objects.

2. Maternal love - for the children, with warmth and tenderness. Her exclusive career is raising her family.
3. Discreet - self-controlled, balanced in attitude and actions.
4. Chaste - pure in attitude, modest in character. Not carnal-minded.
5. Keeper at home - domestically inclined, seeking her fulfillment in the home. She is diligent in the art of homemaking. This involves a full schedule of home duties, which won't permit idleness and a degeneration in attitude, resulting in going around indulging in the habit of gossiping. Such was the case of some women in I Timothy 5:13.
6. Good character - her kindness shines through, in the midst of many trials to her patience.
7. Obedient to her husband - the submissive attitude of the wife is stressed in several epistles.

Isn't it true that very few neighbours are inclined to accompany a believer to a Gospel meeting? They likely consider the believing couple as simply very religious, perhaps too strict and rather fanatical about their religion. At the same time, the neighbours are constantly observing the conduct of the believer and his family, and secretly admire the tranquility and order prevailing in his home. It is a source of wonder to them to discover that there is no television set needed nor desired, at least by the parents. Obviously, the secret of having orderly, disciplined children and a harmonious home environment is the place accorded the

Word of God, not some artificial entertainment which this ungodly world offers.

Coupled with the practice of the doctrine is the necessity to continue steadfastly (Acts 2:42), or persevere, in the things which have been learned. This aspect of godliness in daily life is illustrated by a number of women of apostolic times who were outstanding in particular aspects of service. The different facets of testimony and service reveal the variety of gifts which the Spirit of God has bestowed.

Perseverance in the Doctrine of
Godliness, as Illustrated in
Ten Renowned Women

In the following list, a total of ten women of apostolic times appears under six distinct aspects of service, revealing their widespread testimony of godliness in daily life. Also included is the name meaning of each woman and the city where she laboured for the Lord.

1. Deeds of kindness - working with the hands.
- Dorcas (gazelle), from Joppa - Acts 9:36,39
2. Dedicated homes - known for their hospitality.
At least three women share this honour, as follows:
 - a. Lydia (firebrand, magnet), from Philippi - Acts 16:15
 - b. Priscilla (ancient), from Corinth, later from Rome, etc. - Acts 18:3,26
 - c. Apphia (dear one), from Colosse - Philemon 2,22

3. Distinction as a servant of the church -
as one of the "helps" (I Cor. 12:28).
- Phebe (radiant, shining), from Cen-
chrea - Romans 16:1,2
4. Distinguished in the Gospel - labouring with the
Lord's servants.
 - a. Euodias (a sweet smell)
 - b. Syntyche (well-met) - both of these women
apparently resided in Philippi -Philippians
4:2,3
5. Determined to live godly in Christ Jesus - Elect
lady - II John.
6. Devoted mothers - teaching the Scriptures to the
child. The two women below, mother and daughter,
were specially used in raising Timothy.
 - a. Lois (no flight)
 - b. Eunice (well won), from Lystra (Acts 16:1)
- II Timothy 1:5, 3:15

Note: An interesting contrast in name meanings appears in II Timothy 1, between the pair of feminine names, Lois and Eunice (v.5), and the pair of masculine names, Phygellus and Hermogenes (v.15). Lois means "no flight", while Phygellus means "little fugitive". This suggests to us that unfeigned faith like that of Lois would cause the believer to resist the inclination to flee into hiding in the midst of persecution. Eunice means "well won", whereas Hermogenes means "lucky born". This contrast suggests that the unfeigned faith of Eunice would bring about a triumphant victory in attaining spiritual goals with resulting satisfaction like that expressed by Paul in II Timothy 4:7-8. Such goals in no way depend upon worldly luck.

Before concluding our New Testament studies on the demonstration of godliness in daily life, we consider it important to define the sphere of activity and influence of the godly woman in the world.

The Place of Godly Women in Daily Occupations

The Word of God would not restrain a single sister (or a widow in certain situations) from being gainfully employed in an honest occupation. However, she should not (nor should any brother) seek fulfillment and renown in the commercial, educational, professional or scientific world. The sense of fulfillment of any believer should be found in the things of the Lord.

The married woman's daily activities should center around her home, and her satisfaction should be derived from maintaining the home, with all its domestic duties involved. Thus she will impart that essential ingredient to the home environment, a contented attitude. Whether she has children or not, it is not advisable for her to combine a career in homemaking with outside employment.

Regarding working wives and mothers, we find that the Word of God does not give them any encouragement to seek employment outside their home. Furthermore, we fear that the net material gain, if any, cannot offset the multiple losses. Those losses include their peace of mind being replaced by guilty feelings regarding home responsibilities. Perhaps in some cases the working wife is seeking to escape from her family, her responsibilities, etc. This is rather a selfish, unrealistic approach to her problem. Then there are the lost opportunities to identify and share time with her children.

The time spent daily with the children, even though it may involve monotonous tasks and some drudgery, is of incalculable value. She uses those unplanned opportunities to verbally teach them spiritual truths and is constantly leaving indelible moral lessons implanted on their sub-conscious mind.

We recognize that there are very plausible financial arguments which would encourage two incomes for each household. In view of the losses already set forth, we can only emphasize that the wife and mother's presence and guidance at home are more important than material things. Self-denial will be necessary, as living standards are adjusted. It may not be possible to have the latest equipment or all the desired home furnishings. It could be that educational and social goals for the children may have to be re-evaluated. However, none of these changes should affect her basic attitude of contentment, and useful service for the Lord might be greatly increased. The Lord has promised, "Them that honour Me I will honour" (I Sam. 2:30).

The godly married woman should be able to find a multitude of ways in which to joyfully serve the Lord, using her home as the center of her activities. Her deep sense of fulfillment will be realized in the measure in which she loses herself out of love, first for the Lord, then for others. "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39).

We will conclude our studies of godly women in the world by considering one of the most unique women of the Old Testament, Deborah. Considering her public display of leadership, even out to the battlefield, it might appear strange to examine her story immediately following our exhortations to married

women to remain at home. However, we must emphasize that her public role was only transitory. She was used by the Lord at a moment of crisis, but did not continue to rally the armies of Israel.

Her story, although short, is most interesting, and illustrates the great impact upon this ungodly world which a devout woman can make, operating within her Divinely-prescribed limits. In the Scriptures she rises and fades away, even avoiding mention in the list of heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11. She demonstrated outstanding qualities of leadership, motivating others to action at a moment of crisis in the history of Israel. It is noteworthy that she was already busily engaged in the work of the Lord as a prophetess when directed by the Lord to reveal to Barak the Divine plan for deliverance from the 20-year yoke of oppression under Sisera, commander of the Canaanite armies. We will set forth some aspects of her life, allowing the reader to draw conclusions and extract valuable spiritual lessons.

IV. Detailed Review of Deborah, a Prophetess, Judge and Mother in Israel

The name Deborah suddenly appears and shines brilliantly in two chapters of the book of Judges, then fades immediately. However, in the New Testament when we discover the name Barak (Heb. 11:32) in that gallery of ancient heroes of the faith, we feel inclined to insert a parenthesis beside his name: "(and Deborah)." Apparently the only woman among thirteen judges whose names appear in the book by that name, Deborah and her story are accorded more coverage than the other judges, with the exception of Gideon and Samson. Hers is the only song which

appears in this book of spiritual departure and failure, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25).

The name "Deborah" is significant. Apparently it means orderly motion, and is thereby linked with that busy little creature, the bee, whose instincts compel it to move from flower to flower in a systematic manner. A primary root of the same word essentially means to arrange, to speak and to subdue. We can appreciate these characteristics in the story of Deborah, as she conducted her affairs in a systematic, orderly fashion in the fear of God, being impelled forward by a consistent spiritual momentum, irrespective of the critical situation.

The summary of the history of Deborah is divided into three parts, as follows: her status as a woman, her story and her song. Each of these parts is set forth below in a simplified outline.

The Status of Deborah as a Woman

-from Judges 4

Seven reflections upon Deborah, centering about her life as wife and prophetess, are presented below:

1. Her husband - she is immediately linked with her husband, Lapidoth (meaning firebrand, lightning, torch), at the beginning of the story - v.4.
2. Her occupations - she was a wife, prophetess and judge in Israel - v.4.
3. Her renown - her prominent situation was very temporary, as suggested by the words "at that time".

4. Her dwelling place - she was identified with a particular dwelling place, "the palm tree of Deborah" (v.5). Hers was not an itinerant ministry. In contrast, prophets like Samuel (I Sam. 7:16) had a circuit ministry.
5. Her limited sphere - she did not go out soliciting clients in order to extend her influence and enhance her popularity. The children of Israel came up to her -v.5.
- 6 Her deference to a man - she made no proclamations of her own in any effort to establish her own personal reputation. Rather, upon receiving a revelation from the Lord, she immediately contacted a man named Barak (v.6). His name is derived from a root word meaning "lightning", and conveys the thought of a gleam or a flashing sword.
- 7 Her limited ministry - although identified as a prophetess, she never claimed to have any supernatural revelations regarding future events, as was the case with most of the prophets. Nor did she experience the visit of any angelic messenger, as in the case of Gideon (Judg. 6:12) and of the wife of Manoah (Judg. 13:3,9). Rather, her ministry was limited to seeking deliverance from the present menacing situation from the Canaanite armies under Sisera because of the disobedience and rebellion of the children of Israel.

The Story of Deborah
-from Judges 4 and 5

1. Her renowned activity - she temporarily judged matters arising among the people

of Israel during a period of crisis. The fourth of 13 judges mentioned in this book, she apparently was the only female judge in Israel's history.

2. Her dwelling-place was under the palm tree, located between Ramah ("the height") and Bethel ("house of God"). That is a good place to dwell spiritually, isn't it?
3. Her message - was a detailed command from the Lord which she communicated to Barak, with conviction and confidence in the Word of the Lord.
4. Her promise and warning - she promised to accompany Barak, but warned him that a woman would be honoured.
5. Her action - she marched with Barak and his army of 10,000 men, and definitely inspired them by her fearless manner.
6. Her confidence - was in the Lord and His Word. She never doubted for a moment that the Lord would fulfill all that He had promised.
7. Her song - one of five songs by women in the Scriptures, her song is a masterpiece of poetry, filled with vivid imagery. It could be termed an ode of victory, praising those who rallied to the help of the Lord, condemning those who didn't. The song reveals the true natural cause of Sisera's defeat. A cloudburst flooded the watercourse of Kishon and swept away the invader's chariots. Thus the invading army was thrown into confusion and easily subdued. Sisera met his gruesome end at the hand of a woman, Jael.

The Song of Deborah

-Judges 5

The song includes at least 18 varied themes. Listed below are some of them, each of which lends itself to spiritual applications:

1. "I arose a mother in Israel" (v.7).
2. "My heart is toward the governors—that offered themselves willingly" (v.9).
3. "Lead thy captivity captive" (v.12) - a similar phrase is found in Psalm 68:18, and repeated in Ephesians 4:8, with reference to our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Six groups of helpers are mentioned (v.14, 15, 18). Among them Zebulun and Naphtali figure, and both later are brought into special prophetic blessing (see Isa. 9:1-2 and Matt. 4:13-16).
5. Four groups of hinderers are mentioned (v.15, 16, 17). First is Reuben, with good intentions never fulfilled. Next was Gilead, whose attitude seemed to be non-involvement. Next was Dan, plagued by indecision and error. Finally, there was Asher, who seemed to be a fearful observer, unwilling to take sides until sure of the tide of the battle.
6. The curse pronounced upon Meroz was perhaps due to an indifferent attitude. There is a similarity in the lukewarmness found in Revelation 3:15-18.
7. Blessing was proclaimed for Jael (meaning "a wild goat"), the wife of Heber (meaning "companion") the Kenite.

Before concluding this chapter, we wish to comment further on Deborah's personal reference in her song. This pious woman, apparently childless, who acted so confidently and fearlessly among her down-trodden people, referred to herself as a "mother in Israel". Such "mothers" are truly needed today among the saints of God. Although generally labouring for the Lord daily within the confines of their home, they can extend their sphere of service and influence well beyond the home, for greater spiritual satisfaction and enrichment of their soul.

Chapter Six

SECURITY IN THE MIDST OF DANGER

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me."

Psalm 23:4

The well-known introductory verse above reminds us of the lack of fear the sheep experiences while following the Shepherd through valleys where danger is lurking in every shadow. His confidence is based upon the Shepherd's unfailing reputation, and his calmness rests upon the Shepherd's presence.

In this chapter certain spiritual and moral dangers for women are considered. This is not to imply that men are not exposed to similar dangers. If the strengths and weaknesses of the sexes were compared, men would not have any reason to boast. Certainly the man is fragile (Psa. 39:4). Nevertheless, the woman is more fragile, "the weaker vessel" (I Peter 3:7), emotionally and physically in some respects. As well, due in part to her nature, she perhaps can be more easily deceived. The reader surely has some concept of the three arch-enemies mentioned in the Scriptures. These are examined in detail below, and several Scriptures are included to reveal how we can gain the victory over them.

I. The Implacable Foes – the World, the Flesh and the Devil

THE WORLD

The world is the society of evil men with whom the believer must deal daily. The systems of government and commerce, their activities and organizations, generally based on pride and covetousness, are opposed and rebellious to the Divine plan. The believer is commanded to be subject to the civil powers (Rom. 13:1-7), but not to participate with them in an unequal yoke.

Natural man is in slavery to the elements that constitute the world (Col. 2:20) until set at liberty by the emancipating power of the Gospel. Once born again, he receives the spiritual capacity to overcome the world (I Jn. 5:4). The spirit of this world, which will attempt to capture his interest and affections in one measure or another, must be exorcized through the workings of the Spirit of God, in cooperation with our will. As a result, the old spirit will not continue to control our understanding and reasoning (I Cor. 2:12). A few Scriptures suggest how we can be victorious over this subtle enemy, as follows:

1. I John 2:15 - Love not the world, nor the things in it.
2. Romans 12:2 - Be not conformed to this world.
3. Colossians 3:12 - Seek and set the affection on things above.
4. Galatians 6:14 - Perform a double crucifixion.

THE FLESH

The flesh is that sensual and sinful nature which seeks to gratify and satisfy the base carnal appetites, causing desires and burning passions to give way to open indulgence. A comprehensive list of 17 flesh manifestations is found in Galatians 5:19-21. Three Scriptures suggest how we can gain the victory over this enslaving enemy, as follows:

1. Romans 13:14 - Make no provision for it.
2. Galatians 5:16 - Not to satisfy its desires, but walk in the Spirit.
3. Galatians 5:24 - Crucify the flesh with its passions.

The following references can also be studied in conjunction with those listed above: Colossians 3:5, II Corinthians 10:35, Romans 8:5. It should be remembered that the war with Amalek, a clear type of the "flesh", is perpetual while we remain upon the earth (Exodus 17:16).

THE DEVIL

Once an exalted cherubim, apparently set over this earth, he was lifted up with pride because of his wisdom and beauty, and sought to exalt himself. His fall is vividly described in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Designated in the Scriptures by at least eight fallen titles, he is described by means of three figures: a devouring lion (I Pet. 5:8), a depraving serpent (II Cor. 11:3) and a deceiving angel (II Cor. 11:14). His chief aims appear to be the following: to discredit the Word of God, to denigrate God and all His works, and to dominate the affairs of men

in order to usurp the glory and dominion reserved for Christ. In dealing with men, the devil's greatest tool appears to be temptation. A few Scriptures reveal how victory can be gained over this experienced enemy, as follows:

1. James 4:7 - Resist him and he will flee.
2. I Peter 5:9 - Resist him steadfast in the faith.
3. Ephesians 6:11-18 - Utilize the spiritual armour, including the Sword of the Spirit (the Word) and the spear of prayer.

The devil has an infamous history, extending over nearly six milleniums, of employing deceitful artifices to beguile men and women. We must not be ignorant of his crafty purposes and thoughts (II Cor. 2:11). His chief target is the Word of God. This was first demonstrated with Eve, who was deceived by the crafty arguments of the serpent (II Cor. 11:3).

Later the devil employed forceful tactics in the enslavement of the Hebrews. Pharaoh boldly proclaimed his denial of God and deification of self (Ex. 5:2), but was compelled to change his tactics after four plagues had begun to devastate his land. Then he tried by means of four wiles (Ex. 8:25 & 28, 10:11 & 24) to persuade Moses to compromise the Lord's command. Moses never even flinched, and never yielded even one hoof (Ex. 10:26) in his zealous determination to obey the Word of God, to the letter of the law.

We will consider three Scriptures from the epistles, each of which may be linked up with one of the arch-enemies. The setting of each passage is concerned in first instance with women, but the teaching is certainly not limited to women only. Men can also be

tempted in a similar manner. However, in keeping with the purpose of this study, we will focus upon the artifices employed by the enemy to turn aside believing women.

II. Certain Lurking Dangers, as Implied in Three Scriptures

The Danger from the World's Allurement as suggested in I Timothy 2:9-15

A believing woman could become weary of the reproach and self-denial required to lead a godly life. Leaving off the practice of good works, she could subsequently be carried along by feminine vanity, and eventually would fall into transgression through deceit and the lack of sobriety.

The Danger from the Flesh's Desires as specified in II Timothy 3:6-7

Unbelieving women who are lacking in stability, loaded down with the burden of their sinful life, will seek a new moral-religious doctrine to quiet their afflicted conscience. Easily swayed by evil desires and seductive impulses, they will adopt a form or outward semblance of godliness, at the same time denying the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they can never arrive at a recognition and personal knowledge of the Truth. A saved woman cannot lose her salvation, but could in some measure become "like them that go down into the pit" (Psa. 28:1).

The previous part of the same chapter, verses 1 through 5, reveals a startling picture of the last days, precisely the ones in which we are living now, on the threshold of our Lord's return. There is an overwhelming

20-fold description of the depravity of men. It is amazing that they still profess to hold a form of godliness. However, it is only an outward semblance, a false imitation. No wonder that the apostle warns us of these perilous times, that is, times that are fierce, dangerous, grievous and hard to bear.

The Danger from the Devil's Wives
as stated in I Timothy 5:11-15

The context of the passage presents in particular the case of young widows and the inadvisability of making the local assembly responsible exclusively for their material welfare. However, we will take the liberty to apply it in a general sense to any young woman who begins to display a restiveness toward the things of Christ. Her devotion to her Lord begins to wane, His claims are slowly set aside, and she no longer shows the same anxious spirit to be submissive to His will. Influenced by the emotions, her impulses and the inclinations of her nature could be aroused to the point that she might set her heart upon marriage at any cost. She might even consent to marry an unbeliever, in defiance of the clear prohibition found in II Corinthians 6:14.

The foregoing attitudes might be further complicated by her financial security. Since she would no longer be cast upon God for her daily support, she could develop an independent attitude toward the Lord. Casting off her early commitment to Christ, she eventually could set aside the principle of godly separation. The Lord condemns this independence of attitude and will certainly chasten her in this life. Furthermore, she will suffer some loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The context suggests a continuing course of sad events. With too much time on her hands, she will make idle habits her occupation. Visiting from house to house, she will indulge in silly chatter and tale-bearing, besides prying into the personal affairs of others for curiosity's sake. She might unwittingly become an agent for doctrinal error, as was in evidence in Crete (Titus 1:11). The apostle John warned the elect lady (II John verses 7-11) not to permit anyone carrying false doctrine to even enter her house.

The final result will be disastrous for her and for the testimony to the Lord's Name. The combination of unrestrained sexual desires and much idle time will have caused her to turn aside and actually fall in step behind Satan. The enemy will then have a base from which to launch attacks of reviling words, utilizing his agents, the ungodly, against the testimony of the saints gathered in the local assembly.

May the Lord preserve each one of us in these difficult days of much unrest, increase of riches and idleness. What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly (our conduct) and to love mercy (our character), and to walk humbly with thy God (our communion, or fellowship) - Micah 6:8.

The first reference in this section, I Timothy 2, includes a verse which could lend itself to several strange interpretations. We will consider its meaning in the next section.

III. The Salvation of the Woman, in I Timothy 2:15

This controversial passage has given rise to a number of ideas and theories, particularly with regard to the phrase "saved in childbearing." The word "saved" is not to be interpreted as referring to the soul's destiny. Certainly no other Scripture would even remotely suggest that the eternal salvation of a mother might be related to giving birth to a child. Therefore the word "childbearing" must be linked with the spiritual preservation of the saved woman. The context suggests the possibility that she could lose her spiritual testimony by falling into error. However, the steadfast continuance in the truth will preserve her from falling and will make manifest to others that her faith is in Christ, the basis of her soul's salvation. Since a difference of opinion exists among Bible commentators regarding the interpretation, we will suggest a few explanations of this difficult phrase, and also consider the conditions attached in the last phrases of the verse.

"Saved in Childbearing"

Below are listed three possible explanations of this phrase. The explanations do not limit the application to natural mothers only.

1. The first woman, Eve, was in the transgression, and the curse placed upon her has affected all women. However, the seed of the woman is mentioned in the six-fold curse pronounced upon the serpent (Gen. 3:15). This verse reveals that a woman (Mary) would be the Divinely-chosen instrument to bring in

the promised seed, the Saviour, Who would deal a crushing blow to the serpent (see Gen. 3:15, Luke 11:22, Heb. 2:14, etc.).

2. The previous verses (9 to 14) of I Timothy 2 might appear to condemn women to a fate of uselessness and insignificance. In contrast, a believing woman displays her usefulness in the children (natural and/or spiritual) whom she bears and trains.
3. Godly sisters, particularly those who are married, will be saved from the dangers already enumerated above (Part II) through finding their personal fulfillment in domestic duties, thus remaining within the shelter of their own home.

This is not to imply that they shouldn't have contact with others. There are abounding opportunities to do good deeds to others, in an effort to reach them for Christ, then to encourage them to walk in obedience to His Word. However, the godly sister will give first priority to her family and home responsibilities. In stark contrast, we will make reference to a certain false cult which employs women in particular to visit house-to-house in spreading their pernicious doctrines. Evidently those women are forsaking their families and home responsibilities in order to propagate doctrines which deny the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Conditions Attached

It is imperative to remember the last phrase of verse 15, which emphasizes the necessity for them to remain in faith, love and holiness (or sanctification), with

sobriety. The first part of the verse is singular ("she"), whereas the latter part is plural ("they"). This plural usage in regard to the conditions certainly would not exclude the husband, in which case "they" could be applied to a believing couple. However, in keeping with the context, we would suggest that the primary reference is to saved women in general. In essence, the conditions revolve around abiding in Christ. In His discourse in John 15, the Lord Jesus mentioned repeatedly the necessity to abide in Him as the basis for fruitbearing. We will link below the triplet phrase of the text with specific aspects of abiding in Christ.

Faith - trust in the Word of Christ

Love - devotion toward the Person of Christ

Sanctification - separation to the pathway of
Christ

Finally, the word "sobriety", which can also be rendered sound judgment with discreteness, "is that habitual inner self-government, with its constant rein on all the passions and desires, which would hinder the temptation to these from arising" (W. E. Vine).

In this modern world, which is emphasizing the public role and leadership of women in society, including ecclesiastical offices, it is in order to remind our sisters of their important, yet private role in the assembly. Many godly women have learned by experience that their obedience to the Word of God has given them the greatest satisfaction and pleasure, in a fulfilled life spent for Himself. Since there are subtle pressures being applied to all women today to exercise a public role, to be seen and heard by all, we will set forth some basic tenets

from the Scriptures regarding the activities of women in the assembly.

IV. Orientation with Respect to the Place and Activities of Women in the Assembly

The following is a condensed nine-point study of the place and activities of women in the assembly, which we trust will help to orient godly sisters.

1. There is no precedent for women's meetings as a function of the local church.
 - No example is found in the Acts. The whole congregation met together for general prayer (Acts 1:14) and for specific prayer (Acts 12:5). There is no reference whatever to so-called "Dorcas meetings" in Acts 9:36 and 39. Nor is any example found in the epistles, not even in II John, which was written to "the elect lady."
2. Their place in the assembly.
 - They are exhorted to be silent and subject to the man, who teaches audibly in the congregation (I Cor. 11:3, I Tim. 2:11-12.) A women's meeting generally implies that one woman is occupying a place of authority while teaching other women, who in turn are collectively being subject to her.
3. Their conduct in the assembly.
 - They are commanded to remain silent, without teaching, praying or participating publicly. See I Cor. 14:34-38, I Tim. 2:11-12.

4. The authority in the assembly.

- This has been Divinely-assigned to men, and in particular, to the elders, who must give account to the Lord (Heb. 13:17). How could the elders act as overseers in a meeting convened for women only?

5. One possible weakness of women.

- Perhaps they can be deceived more easily, and susceptible to error. See I Tim. 2:14, II Tim. 3:6-7. etc.

6. Certain perils which might be fairly common to women. These would include the following:

a. Discord, involving the lack of harmony and even clashes with other sisters. See Phil. 4:2.

b. Obedience to impulses and inclinations, leading to rebellion against the Lord - I Tim. 5:11,12.

c. The possibility of becoming gossips and busybodies (meddlers) as a result of idleness - I Tim. 5:13.

7. Their Occupation.

- They should not be known so much for their words as for their works, being occupied in diligent, quiet labour with their hands. See Acts 9:36, I Peter 3:46, Proverbs 31.

8. Their salvation (not that of their souls but rather that of losing their testimony by falling into error).

- They will voluntarily limit their domain to their own home. See I Tim. 2:15, 5:14-15; Titus 2:5.

Note: The word "domain", according to Webster's dictionary, implies the territory under one's rule, the land belonging to one person, the field or sphere of activity or influence.

9. Their losses, resulting from not obeying the Word of God.

- The losses will include present spiritual blessings and future eternal rewards. See II John 8, etc.

In the foregoing, we do not wish to imply that a few sisters should never gather together to pray or to read the Scriptures, in the safety of a home environment. Nor would we condemn a heart exercise of sisters to meet together periodically in order to work with their hands for a common purpose, provided that certain guidelines and limitations have already been established by the elders of the assembly. Rather, the above points are set forth to help our sisters (and brethren) recognize that regular church meetings designated for women only, whether for prayer or for preaching of the Word of God, have no Scriptural precedent.

In the book of Ecclesiastes we read, "A threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccles. 4:12). We will conclude our studies in this chapter by considering the threefold cord of security revealed in Titus 2:11-13.

V. The Threefold Cord of Security – a Study in Titus 2:11-13

The earlier portion of Titus 2 sets forth the conduct of believers, with the object of adorning "the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (v.10). Next the apostle expresses the Divine purposes and pattern behind it all. Thus the rules of conduct will not appear like another legal system, but rather, as the means to be more like Himself whom we love and whom we soon shall see. Listed below are the three basic cords of spiritual activity, intertwined one with the other, to keep us occupied and balanced while we await the return of Christ.

1. Denying – as pupils taught, by the grace of God.
 - a. Ungodliness – involving everything in which God is not included in our plans. Ungodliness is the very antithesis of the basic purpose of this book.
 - b. Wordly lusts – meaning intense desires centered in this world system, which is not of the Father (I John 2:16).
2. Living – as pilgrims traveling, onward and upward.
 - a. Soberly – to oneself, involving our course.
 - b. Righteously – before others, involving our conduct.
 - c. Godly – toward God, involving our character.

3. Looking - with anticipation, as possessors triumphant.
 - a. For that blessed hope - our confident anticipation of His coming, so blissful and comforting, filled with incalculable richness and benefits.
 - b. For the appearing of the glory - His manifestation of glory.

With what expectancy and eagerness should we look forward to seeing our Saviour and Lord at His coming! Then we will more fully comprehend His threefold work done for and in us, as revealed in verse 14: substitution, redemption and purification.

Chapter Seven

THE RECOMPENSE FOR GODLY WOMEN

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer....be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Revelation 2:10

The introductory verse, directed to the persecuted church in Smyrna, reveals the high value that the Lord places upon faithfulness. The New Testament, from Acts through Revelation, records the names of nine outstanding saints who were recognized as faithful. The first one was a woman, Lydia (Acts 16:15).

This chapter sets forth the recompense for faithful sisters, in an effort to help them to recognize that their ministry, although in large part hidden from public view, will reap spiritual dividends now and eternal rewards forever. Several principles are considered, both from parables and from statements by the Lord Jesus, with regard to the Divine estimate for purposes of determining future rewards.

I. Principles and Practices for Determining Rewards

Three outstanding parables of the Lord Jesus bring before us vividly the day of reckoning, and the eager anticipation of the participants. The spiritual lesson from each

of the parables is briefly stated in the study which follows.

Parables which Suggest
Certain Basic Principles

1. Luke 19:11-17 - Parable of the Minas

- As servants we all have an equal indebtedness to obey.

2. Matthew 25:14-30 - Parable of the Talents

- As stewards, we have been assigned unequal responsibilities.

3. Matthew 20:1-16 - Parable of the Labourers

- As labourers together in our Lord's vineyard, we will be recompensed for our adherence to His Word and confidence in His promises, not necessarily our length of service nor the load imposed, by human standards.

The Lord's purpose in relating this parable is important. Peter had asked a question (Matt. 19:27) in an effort to obtain a prearranged recompense. In the parable the Lord desires to impress upon him (and ourselves) the spiritual lesson that it is much better to trust Him to give what is right, rather than to rely upon some contractual agreement.

In His teaching the Lord Jesus made reference repeatedly to rewards. Seven of His teachings are summarized in the following list.

Principles and Attitudes Taught
by the Lord Jesus

1. Public Recognition - Matthew 6:3-6

- In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus made reference to alms done in secret and to private prayer, faithfully offered up in the closet, both of which will be rewarded openly.

2. Unhypocritical Fasting - Matthew 6:17-18

- Biblical fasting is not simply abstinence from food, but an exercise of spiritual and physical discipline involving a spiritual commitment, with self-denial. The object is to concentrate undistractedly on a higher spiritual plane, chiefly in prayer. Such a spiritual commitment in secret will be rewarded openly.

Note: The Divinely-approved fast, consisting of eight statements, is set forth in Isaiah 58:6,7.

3. Treasure and the Heart - Luke 12:34

- The affection of the heart will be drawn to that thing or person which occupies the center of one's interest and desire.

4. Returns upon Investments - Luke 12:48

- As stewards, we have received unequal quantities of Divinely-bestowed abilities and responsibilities. Each one is held responsible to the Lord for her utilization of the particular Divine gift(s) or favour received.

5. Partiality and Reciprocity -Luke 14:12-14

- Hospitality and assistance given to the poor and other underprivileged people who cannot repay the giver will result in greater personal blessing now and increased future reward.

6. Fidelity in Least Things - Luke 16:10

- This principle is practiced in the measure in which one faithfully completes simple tasks, not despising them because of their simplicity or menial nature.

7. Dual Masters - Luke 16:13

- It is impossible to put your trust in God and in something else, whether material riches or some other treasure.

The foundation teaching of the Lord Jesus, found in the Gospels, is further emphasized in the apostles' doctrine in the epistles. The rewards are not clearly defined, but several references give us insight into the practices or works which will be rewarded in His presence. Five Scriptures from the epistles are listed below, with accompanying explanations.

Practices in the Epistles Which are Linked with Rewards

1. Personal willingness to give, with cheerfulness, readiness and joy, is acceptable before God and represents increasing spiritual blessings for the present as well as eternal rewards - II Corinthians 9:7-8, 8:12.

- Several principles regarding giving were demonstrated in the Macedonian saints, as revealed in II Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. These principles were founded upon their underlying heart attitude. The greater gift, of themselves to the Lord (II Cor. 8:5), far transcended the lesser gift of their money.
2. Personal sacrifice to further the Lord's work is well-pleasing to God - Philipians 4:14-19.
 - Practical gifts given toward the work of the Lord represent fruit abounding and a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.
 3. Good works toward those in need represent fruit - Titus 3:14.
 - This exhortation is concerned with learning and continuing to practice good works, particularly toward those in urgent need.
 4. Ministry toward the saints is assured of Divine remembrance - Hebrews 6:10.
 - A double negative emphasizes the positive truth that God not only remembers but will recompense every practical work done for the benefit of the saints. This practical service is linked with the "things that accompany salvation" (v.9).
 5. Faithful hospitality toward co-workers - III John 5-8
 - There is a sure reward for faithful work in providing hospitality and assistance to traveling servants of the Lord and toward the Lord's people in general.

Our knowledge of heaven and the events in store there for us is very limited. Our finite minds cannot comprehend the infinite. Consequently, the Lord has limited the revelation in His Word. However, we would conclude that the first major celestial event after the Rapture of the Church is the Judgment Seat, or Tribunal of Christ.

The system of rewards employed by the ancient Greeks in their athletic contests was centered around the "bema" or reward seat, consisting of a raised platform occupied by the president of the games. This is portrayed briefly in I Corinthians 9:24-25. The heavenly Tribunal and the rewards in general are considered in the following section.

II. The Tribunal of Christ and the Rewards

At the Tribunal the entire period on earth, from the moment we were saved until called into His presence, will be reviewed. Four basic Scriptures in Paul's epistles reveal a few general details of that event in heaven. Those Scriptures are listed below.

Details Regarding the Tribunal of Christ

1. I Corinthians 3:10-15 - the evaluation of our stewardship and service.
 - Three superior indestructible elements are set in contrast to three inferior destructible products derived from the earth. These overlaid materials, symbols of the individual responsibility of the believer to build in doctrine and practice upon the only Foundation, will be proved by fire.

2. I Corinthians 4:1-5 - the evaluation of the motives behind stewardship and service.
 - The Lord alone possesses the authority to critically examine the motives and abilities of each of His stewards. The true servant of the Lord can act in loyalty to Christ and His Word, not being unduly influenced by human opinion and judgment, with the confidence that the Master will rightly and righteously assess all faithful service in the day of reward.

3. II Corinthians 5:8-10 - the evaluation of our conduct, as compared with the Divine standards.
 - Each servant of Christ should labour zealously for Him, recognizing that account must be given for all that has been done since the moment he received Christ by faith. This "judgment" will determine if the works were good (or beneficial) or good-for-nothing.

4. Romans 14:10-12 - the evaluation of the motives governing our conduct.
 - Every human tendency to judge motives of other saints while here upon earth is rendered invalid. Individual accounting to God will be required.

Our knowledge of the rewards is very limited. However, a few Scriptures can enlighten our understanding of the manifestation or disclosure of the rewards.

Disclosure of the Rewards

In a general sense, there are two, perhaps more, facets of truth concerning the manner in which different rewards will be distinguished in that day. Each of these is linked with the two underlying themes presented in previous chapters; namely, subjection to the authority of the Lord, and self restraint, for His glory. The two facets are set forth below.

1. Merited authority - Matt. 25:21,23

- Each of two faithful servants doubled the talents delivered to him by his lord. The commending words of praise and promise of future authority are identical. This parable might suggest the bright prospect of delegated authority by the risen Lord to those sisters who in faithful simplicity upon earth have manifested consistently their subjection to authority.

2 Shining glory - Prov. 4:18, Dan. 12:3, Matt. 13:43

- Each of the above references suggests a resplendent reflection of the Lord's glory, in His presence. The reason behind this brilliance of reflected glory is found in each passage, as follows: Proverbs 4:18 - the path of the just; Daniel 12:3 - leading others to Christ; Matthew 13:43 - a righteous life with the ear attentive to His voice.

The above Scriptures could suggest the bright future for godly sisters who for His sake have lived in obscurity and reproach, veiling their external beauty to more fully display internal beauty for

Himself. They are not "stars" on earth's entertainment program, but they will surely shine as "Stars" in Heaven's eternal purposes.

This study would not be complete without considering the victor's crowns which are mentioned in six different epistles and the Revelation.

III. The Crowns Displayed

In our studies we have found seven victor's crowns (Gr. - stephanos) mentioned in the New Testament. The crowns and corresponding references are listed below.

Seven Victor's Crowns

1. Incorruptible C. I Corinthians 9:25
2. C. of Rejoicing I Thess. 2:19,
Phil. 4:1
3. C. of Life - James 1:12
4. C. of Righteousness - II Timothy 4:8, (Rev. 3:11)
5. C. of Glory - I Peter 5:4
6. C. of The Life - Revelation 2:10
7. C. of Gold - Revelation 4:4

Note: We recognize that different brethren, knowledgeable in the Scriptures, have compiled shorter lists of the crowns. Some do not distinguish between the crown mentioned in James 1:12 and that in Revelation 2:10.

However, on the basis of the context, including the fact that the masculine gender is employed in the word "man" in James 1:12, we have listed them separately.

As we contemplate these crowns and the practical labours of godly sisters, we would suggest that they could be eligible for at least four of them. Each entry in the following list below includes the basis for rewarding, and the specific aspect of service for those who are eligible.

Crowns for which Women Could be Eligible

1. Incorruptible C. - I Corinthians 9:25 Basis for reward - denial of self, with mastery over the old man.
Eligible recipients - self-denying runners.
2. C. of Righteousness - II Timothy 4:8, (Revelation 3:11)
Basis for reward - a completed course with His coming in view.
Eligible recipients - diligent stewards.
3. C. of The Life - Revelation 2:10
Basis for reward - willingness to give one's life for Christ.
Eligible recipients - willing martyrs.
4. C. of Gold - Revelation 4:4
The crown - this crown appears to display the dignity and authority which is common to all the saints of the church age.
The recipients - all the redeemed church saints, in an act of worship, lay down their received glory before the exalted Giver, thus ascribing to Him alone supreme glory and worthiness.

The crowns are given, not for the glory of the recipient, but to further glorify the Giver, Who alone is worthy. Thus the eternal Divine purposes for the believer in Christ will be seen to bring greater glory to God (I Cor. 6:20).

IV. The Recognition or Renown

(From the book, Three New Testament Temples, by the author)

The rewards will represent a special capacity to manifest or radiate the glory of Christ throughout eternity. A greater reward will represent a greater conferred capacity to bring glory to God. In the end Christ rather than the saint will be glorified by the reward.

There will apparently be a difference of luminescence, or radiation of His glory. This truth is illustrated in several Scriptures, among them the following: Proverbs 4:18, Daniel 12:3 and Matthew 13:43. The capacities to radiate His glory will differ. However, each saint will be filled to the limit of his individual capacity to "show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9).

As we contemplate the wonderful eternal purposes of our God for us, and His marvelous grace working in us, we should be constrained to lead more holy lives, being emptied of that which is earthly and filled with the Spirit. "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (II Peter 3:11).

APPENDIX I

THE RESIDENCE OF JESUS PRIOR TO THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT
- WAS IT BETHLEHEM OR NAZARETH?

Seven Arguments Favoring Bethlehem

Name Meaning - "house of bread"
Location 5.5 miles south of Jerusalem
Elevation 2550 feet
Population - ? in the 1st century -
Over 35,000 presently

1. Initial Residence - in Bethlehem.

- The law of Moses required that the mother of a male child recognize a 40-day purification period. It is logical to assume that Joseph would have set up residence in Bethlehem during that period. The circumcision of the Child was performed on the 8th day (Lk. 2:21), likely in Bethlehem. The presentation in the temple in Jerusalem (Lk. 2:22) would have occurred after that 40-day purification period. It is not unreasonable to suggest that they then returned to their residence in Bethlehem.

2. Herod's Decree of death to male infants.

- The execution of the decree was limited to Bethlehem and the borders round about (Mt. 2:16). It did not extend to the far northern province of Galilee, where the city of Nazareth was located. If Joseph and Mary and the Child had been living in Nazareth, there would have been no need to flee to Egypt.

3. The Highway Route

- Bethlehem, located south of Jerusalem on a commanding limestone ridge of the Judean highland, overlooks the main southern highway to Hebron and Egypt. However, the routes leading south from Nazareth evidently passed through or near Jerusalem. If Joseph were living in Nazareth, it would have been unfeasible to risk traveling south, after having received the angelic warning (Mt. 2:13).

4. The First Mention of Nazareth

- The province of Galilee and city of Nazareth are not mentioned in the N.T. until Matthew 2:22,23. Considering that Matthew was a native of Galilee, he would have a personal interest in events concerning his own province. It would be reasonable to assume that he would mention when Joseph and Mary first established residence in Nazareth.

5. The Return from Egypt

- After leaving Egypt, Joseph contemplated returning to Judea (Mt. 2:22), not Galilee. It is probable that he intended to make Bethlehem their permanent residence, until his plans were Divinely-altered.

6. The Stigma

- It is quite probable that Joseph had experienced some reproach in Nazareth where his espoused wife was expecting a child (see Mt. 1:19). Later, on the journey south to Bethlehem lasting 3 days or more, they might have endured further embarrassments from fellow travelers. Possibly they decided to reside in Bethlehem, where they could live in

relative obscurity. The arrival of the wise men would change that situation. (Note: Regarding the wedding ceremony, it is not clear where that was performed, whether in Nazareth or in Bethlehem. Weddings were generally celebrated at least a year after betrothal.)

7. Royal Considerations

- A prolonged residence in Bethlehem would further identify Jesus (and Joseph and Mary) with the house of David. That was the city linked with the residence and anointing of David the king (I Sam. 16:1-13). Perhaps there were certain Divine purposes to be fulfilled in connection with the royalty and inheritance of David's descendants which will be revealed during the Millennium.

Argument Favoring Nazareth

Name Meaning - "a branch, or shoot", because of its insignificance (Isa. 11:1)
Location - 88 miles north of Jerusalem
Elevation 1320 ft.
Population Several thousand, maybe even 15000, according to Josephus in the 1st century
over 29000 presently

1. Luke 2:39 - "they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."

APPENDIX II

THE ANOINTINGS OF JESUS BY WOMEN IN BETHANY

A detailed study reveals several outstanding differences between the events recorded in John 12, and those found in the parallel passages Matthew 26 and Mark 14. However, we will not be controversial if some Christians wish to consider the three passages as referring to the same event. These differences are listed below.

Notable Differences between John 12 and Matthew 26/Mark 14

John 12:1-8, 11:2

1. Six days before the Passover.
2. The house of Martha. (see Lk. 10:38, Jn. 11:1)
3. Mary anointed Him.
4. A pound of ointment of spikenard
5. She anointed the feet of Jesus. Also, she wiped His feet with her hair.
6. Judas Iscariot murmured.

Matthew 26:2,6-13 and Mark 14:1,3-9

1. Two days before the Passover
2. The house of Simon the leper
3. A woman anointed Him
4. An alabaster cruse of very precious ointment of spikenard.
5. She broke (the seal) and poured the ointment upon His head.
6. Some of His disciples had indignation and murmured against her

7. The value-300 pence.

8. Jesus' words:

- 1) Let her alone
- 2) Against the day of
My burying
- 3) For the poor
always...
- 4) Me ye have not
always.

7. The value - might
have been sold for
much (also, more than
300 pence).

8. Jesus' words:

- 1) Why trouble ye the
woman
- 2) She hath wrought a
good work upon me.
- 3) Ye have the poor
always with you.
- 4) Whensoever...ye may
do them good.
- 5) Me ye have not
always.
- 6) She hath done what
she could.
- 7) She hath poured
this ointment on
my body.
- 8) She is come
aforehand to
anoint My body.
- 9) The memorial of
her spoken
throughout the
whole world.

APPENDIX III

ANALYSIS OF THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

In every realm of creation on earth there are certain physical and biological differences which distinguish clearly between male and female. These differences are more pronounced in the human race than in lower forms of life. The Creator has prepared and equipped the woman for a different role to that of the man. "Male and female created He them" (Gen. 1:27).

Differences can be observed both in the physical and mental realms. It is interesting that in a number of aspects, one difference which might in a remote sense suggest inferiority of women is offset by another difference suggesting superiority. For example, women in general are smaller than men in stature and bone structure. However, this physical disparity is compensated by a more graceful and delicate form and movement. In mental ability, both men and women are about equal. Emotional differences, however, tend to create mental differences. Women in general think in terms of specific, personal needs and desires, while men often think abstractly.

The physical and biological differences, coupled with the mental approach, convince us that women in general have been designed by the Creator for a private role, centered around the home and its domestic duties. They seem to be ideally equipped for tasks concerned with homemaking and child care. However, in public service, which often

demands a dynamic and forceful approach, they frequently find themselves at a disadvantage.

The trend in the modern world is for ambitious women to pursue certain public careers. The majority of them, nevertheless, experience serious personal conflicts between the career and basic desires for love and marriage, including the roles of homemaker and mother. Frequently they find themselves in competition with men, and begin to complain that the employment structure gives superior opportunities and advantages to men, besides a lack of recognition for women. Hence the rise of the feminist liberation movements.

The fact that the campaigns for "equal rights" have been waged for many years, even centuries, leads us to conclude that the matter far transcends the attitudes and legal system prevailing in any nation. The place assigned to the woman in the Divine plan is different from that of the man. This place entails Divinely-planned differences which cannot be ignored nor abrogated by unisex or feminist movements without incurring Divine retribution. The adversary has been attempting, overtly in recent years, to erase the distinction between the sexes which God ordained in creation. Any "triumph" by women will not give them lasting happiness. Rather, it will eventually lead to greater enslavement.

The truly liberated woman does not consider herself to be oppressed by a chauvinistic, male-dominated society. Her life is Christ-centered, not self-centered nor cause-centered, and is regulated by the Word of God under the guidance of the Spirit of God. She demonstrates her devotion to Christ, has a continuing desire to please Him, and derives pleasure from being subject to His Word.

APPENDIX IV

OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WHO ILLUSTRATE A VARIETY OF FIELDS OF MINISTRY

A. General Status of Sixteen Outstanding Women of the New Testament

1. Seven single women: Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, Martha, Dorcas, Euodias, Syntyche and Phebe.
2. Six widows: Anna, Peter's wife's mother, Mary mother of John Mark, Lydia, Lois, and the Elect lady.
3. Three married women: Priscilla, Eunice and Apphia.

Note: Several assumptions have been made in the above lists.

B. List of the Sixteen Outstanding Women (Note: The meaning of each name is given in parenthesis.)

1. Anna (gracious) - Luke 2:37
 - Her Ministry - consisted of graciously serving the Lord in fasting and prayers.
(Note: True fasting is described in Isaiah 58:6-8.)
2. Peter's wife's mother - Mark 1:29-34
 - Her Ministry - consisted of untiring service toward all who were in Simon's

house. Perhaps she also ministered to those who came in the evening, desiring to be healed by Jesus.

3. Mary Magdalene and other women - Luke 8:2-3

- Their Ministry - consisted of faithfully providing for the Lord and His disciples from their own personal belongings.

4. Martha (lady) - Luke 10:38, John 12:2

- Her Ministry - consisted of maintaining a hospitable home where the Lord and His disciples were always welcome.

5. Mary of Bethany (several conflicting meanings: bitterness, rebellion, or strong)

- Luke 10:39,42; John 12:3

- Her Ministry - was revealed in her devoted heart as she sat enthralled at the feet of Jesus, hearing his voice, hearkening to His revelation and honouring His Person and Name.

6. Dorcas (a gazelle, as beautiful, goodly)

- Acts 9:36,39

- Her Ministry - consisted of good works and almsdeeds. Abounding in practical service for the Lord, she also found time to make clothing for widowed sisters. She is renowned as the only woman in the Bible who is specifically called "a disciple".

7. Mary of Jerusalem, mother of John Mark

- Acts 12:5,12

- Her Ministry - consisted of offering her house as a meeting place for the assembly in Jerusalem.

8. Lydia (firebrand, magnet) - Acts 16:14,15

- Her Ministry was unique in its openness, as follows: an opened heart to receive the Word of God, an opened life to faithfully live for the Lord, and an opened home to receive those who serve the Lord. Her faithful testimony and service, like a magnet, would surely attract others to Christ.

9. Priscilla (little Prisca, meaning ancient)

- Acts 18, Romans 16:3, I Cor. 16:19, II Tim 4:19

- Her Ministry - consisted of being a true help to her godly husband, giving a hand in his employment, practicing hospitality, using the house for meetings, and continuing happily to the end. It appears that they suffered uprooting several times, being forced to emigrate because of persecution. Nevertheless, their faith was unshaken and useful service was unhindered.

It is noteworthy that the apostle Paul, in his final instructions to Timothy prior to suffering martyrdom, made mention of "Prisca and Aquila". The meaning of her name suggests a traditional pattern, perhaps old-fashioned in dress and customs, not governed by modern styles and trends.

10. Euodias (a sweet smell; or fragrant and prosperous journey)-

and

11. Syntyche (well-met, fortunate)-
Philippians 4:2

- Their Ministry - was connected with Paul the apostle in the Gospel, likely in personal evangelism. (Another remarkable example of personal witnessing by a woman is found in John 4:28-30, 39-42.)

Both of these women had laboured diligently and unitedly with the apostle in the Gospel. However, they had forgotten the exhortation to retain the mind of Christ in them (Phil. 2:5) in their attitude the one toward the other. Therefore the apostle must admonish them. The name meaning of Euodias, and her personal problem with Syntyche, remind us of the reality of the illustration found in Ecclesiastes 10:1.

12. Lois (no flight)

and

13. Eunice (well-won; lit. happy victory) - II
Timothy 1:5, 3:14-15

- Their Ministry - was of that highest calling for a mother, to raise the children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), teaching them the Word of God from their earliest days. These two women laid an excellent foundation for the child Timothy, demonstrating before him their genuine faith and love for the Holy Scriptures.

Note: The name meanings of Lois and Eunice have already been analyzed. (See Chapter Five, Section III.)

14. Phebe (radiant, shining) - Romans 16:1

- Her Ministry - as "a servant of the church", reveals the confidence and esteem with which she was regarded by the saints in Cenchrea, and by the apostle Paul. Regarding the meaning of her name, we are reminded of Scripture references to a "shining light" in John 5:35 and Proverbs 4:18.

15. Apphia (dear one) - Philemon 2,22

- Her Ministry - consisted of maintaining a good testimony before household servants (or employees), using the home for assembly meetings, practicing hospitality toward visiting servants of the Lord, and praying for them.

16. Elect lady - II John 1-9

- Her Ministry - as suggested in the epistle, included persevering in the doctrine of Christ, walking in love according to His commandments, and raising children in the truth.

- In addition, there was the household of Stephanas (I Cor. 16:15). Theirs was a dedicated ministry ("addicted") in serving the saints in practical ways.