

GOD'S ORDER.

“But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”
- 1 Cor. 11:3.

The Apostle Paul here uses the human body as an illustration of God's order and arrangement among his intelligent creatures. The symbol is an apt one, and suggestive of perfect harmony. The head is the director and care-taker of the body; every interest of the body is taken into consideration by the head, and every possible provision made and applied to meet those interests. And in turn, the members of the body are always at the prompt and willing service of the head. And such is the sympathy between the various members that if one is disabled the other members are ever on the alert to execute the plans devised by the head for its recovery.

The headship of Jehovah was expressed to Adam in his perfect condition in Eden, when God said: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die (Gen. 2:16,17, – margin). Here was an expression of Jehovah's rightful authority, his loving care and his generous provision – his headship. Man in turn should have expected to reverence, respect and obey the authority, to reciprocate the love and to gratefully accept and enjoy Jehovah's bounty. In the obedience expected, the idea of base servility was absent. Love commanded and love should have delighted in obedience.

Even Christ Jesus, highly exalted as he is, delights to acknowledge the headship of Jehovah – "My Father is greater than I"; "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." And again: "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psa. 40:8). In harmony with this thought of the headship of Jehovah, the

prophet Isaiah represents Christ as the "Arm of Jehovah" (Isa. 53:1; 59:16), and in obedience to Jehovah's will he was active, prompt and willing, even unto death. Thus our Lord set us an example of the true relationship which should exist between himself the head and the members of His body.

Since Christ has redeemed mankind from death, all judgment, authority and power is given unto him; the office of the head is now vested in him; hence Paul declares: The head of man is Christ. And whatever is implied by this term in expressing the relationship between our Lord Jesus and Jehovah, his head, is also implied in that relation between Christ and man. He, then, who would be perfect, must find his chief delight in learning and doing the will of Christ, even as Christ Jesus delights to do the will of Jehovah. It should be his constant aim to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:5.

The next step in God's order indicated by the Apostle, is man the head of woman, or as shown in Eph. 5:23, the husband the head of the wife. Many who see clearly the headship of Jehovah, and the headship of Christ, fail to see the headship of man in the domestic relation. Prejudice, public sentiment and the abuse of power, have made this and similar expressions of the faithful Apostle quite unpopular. And this is not surprising, in the fallen and disordered condition of humanity. The Apostle Paul is variously charged with being a despiser of women, and as speaking without divine authority; and this even among Christians. But when rightly viewed, Paul, as usual, is found to give faithful expression to the divine order dictated by unerring wisdom for the highest good and happiness of all.

If the husband is the head of the wife, it implies exactly the same responsibilities on the part of each as named above. The husband should be the protector, provider and director in the affairs of life, and the wife the cheerful, willing co-worker in harmony with his will. He, therefore, who would assume the relation of head, should see that he is

capable and willing to fill it after the divine pattern; and she who would become a man's partner in life, should see that she is ready to fill such position according to the divine arrangement.

Yes, says some one, that would all do very well if men were perfect, but we know that it not unfrequently happens that the wife has more ability and judgment to act as head than the husband. Very true, but that should be considered before such contracts are made. If unhappily it has not been considered in time, such wives should make the best of the situation and quietly assist in the office of head, with as much modesty, and as little appearance of doing so, as the circumstances will admit. It also happens, says another, that the husband's will often runs counter to the Lord's will; how then? We answer, If the husband is consecrated to the Lord, and yet his will appears to be out of harmony with the Lord's will, he will be very ready, either to *prove* his course to be in harmony with the Lord's will or to change it. And here we see the wisdom which dictates that we should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14). But if such contracts have been formed before we became consecrated believers, we must bear in mind that our first responsibility is now to our Lord our Heavenly Bridegroom. The worldly husband is not the head of his wife as a "new creature" espoused to Christ. Her first allegiance, is, therefore, to her real though invisible Lord, and in so far as may be consistent with this new relation, she should endeavor to fulfill the old also – a thing not possible in every respect. For one of those consecrated to God as living sacrifices to thereafter become unequally yoked with one of the world's children, is to violate the direct command of God (2 Cor. 6:14), and to take a long step towards ignoring union with Christ, "for what communion hath light with darkness"? The children of this world strive for the things of this world and delight in the world's approval, while the consecrated child of God has renounced all these and should be striving only to obtain those things which are beyond and entirely unknown to the world. But if both are united *in the Lord*, and walking after the Spirit, to do the will of the husband is to do the will of Christ.

The Christian wife sustains the same relation to the Christian husband that the Christian husband sustains to Christ, and that Christ sustains to God who is head over all. Should submission on the part of any be regarded as mere servility? By no means. Christ did not so regard it; why should we? There is neither servility nor tyranny where love rules. Love is neither boastful of its authority nor ashamed of its submission.

This order of headship we believe will still be God's order when all things are brought to perfection; and although there is much friction and lack of harmony now, because of human imperfection, there will be none whatever then. When Christ having finished his work delivers up the kingdom to the Father, he shall still be "subject to the Father." The wife will then be subject to the husband because it will be her delight to do his will, for the woman was made for the man; and the husband will delight to honor the wife, because she is the glory of her husband.

Ah, says Mr. Ingersol, when God said: "Thy husband shall rule over thee," he established domestic slavery. Truly domestic slavery has followed, but did God establish it? Not at all. Sin established it. It is a part of the wages of sin. Man, created to bless by his power to rule, too often falls into the error of tyrannical misrule, and the desire of the wife which is toward her husband, alas, often ends in bitter disappointment – just as God had said. And not until the remedy is fully applied will the curse be lifted. And when that remedy is fully applied, man will recognize his true position and fill it, and woman likewise. The husband will delight to honor the wife as the weaker vessel, and the wife will see that she reverences her husband. The wife will look up with a lawful pride in her husband's **[R766 : page 6]** manly strength and glory, while he will regard with admiration and affection her womanly grace – not equal and alike in all respects, but each possessing those qualities of heart and mind which make them companions for each other.

If the relationship between husband and wife in the divine order stands thus, it cannot be true as some teach, that man and woman are exact equals in every respect. God never makes one the head over another exact equal. Jehovah is superior to Christ, Christ superior to man and man superior to woman the weaker vessel. Man's superiority consists in his greater strength, both physical and mental. These various steps are in God's order. True, in the present mixed and imperfect condition, many women are superior to many men, but such women should be very sure not to become wives of such men; for in so doing they must either violate the divine order (Eph. 5:22), or else submit themselves to an inferior which is also out of harmony with the Lord's design.

In view of these considerations, let us note the instruction of the Apostle Paul, and see that its very object is the same as that contemplated in the union of the first perfect pair in Eden: "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church, and he is the Saviour [preserver, care-taker] of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in every thing. Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought man to love their wives as their own bodies" (Eph. 5:22-28). Children may then obey both parents, since each will be in harmony with the other and with the Lord.

In recognition of the same principle, the headship of man, Paul further states: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over man, but to be quiet" (1 Tim. 2:12). Surely Paul does not mean that a woman's lips must be forever sealed that she may not declare the good tidings of great joy to others. Does not the same Apostle say: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is

neither male nor female: for ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus." And does not the prophet Isaiah teach that all the anointed, are anointed to preach the good tidings. It is in harmony with these, then, that we must understand the above words of the Apostle.

The Apostle's idea seems therefore to be, that in no case, however important the truth we are commissioned to bear, is woman to assume a position of authority and command. She may tell the blessed tidings of great joy anywhere and everywhere, and to whomsoever she has opportunity; but always with becoming modesty, stating the truth so clearly that *of itself* it may carry conviction with it and her own individuality be lost sight of. This element of character is one which naturally belongs to woman, but is generally very soon lost by those who attempt to work in a public way. The work for the majority of women, is the individual, quiet and none the less effective work. Her greatest influence is that exerted strictly within her divinely appointed sphere. If opportunity and ability should point out a more public sphere of usefulness, she may fill it as long as such opportunity lasts, if in so doing, she bears that modest, quiet demeanor, in action, word, and apparel, which becometh woman professing Godliness.

Again, we see that in this relationship of husband and wife, is prefigured the beautiful relationship between Christ Jesus and the church. And as in the type, so in the antitype, the church, the bride of Christ is to be subject unto him in everything; earnestly seeking at all times to know, and then delighting to do his will. As the woman is not to assume authority and direct the man, so the church is not to assume authority and to attempt to direct in the Lord's work, but is to be "quiet," searching diligently to know his plan and methods, and then endeavoring faithfully to execute them.

When God's plan shall be brought fully into execution, we see that loving authority and joyful submission will fill the universe with blessed peace and everlasting joy – and "God shall be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). Head over all – his will done in earth as it is done in heaven.

Seeing this to be God's ultimate design, it should be our endeavor now, so far as it is in our power, to carry out and illustrate that purpose now. It can only be fully illustrated, however, by those who are "united in the Lord."

The Apostle's high regard for woman and woman's work is shown by his mention of several faithful co-laborers and helpers among them – see Rom. 16:1-6,13; [R766 : page 7] also Phil. 4:3: "I entreat thee...help those women which labored with me in the gospel.... whose names are in the book of life." And Acts 1:14: "All continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women." And 1 Cor. 11:5: "Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth (teacheth)."

These scriptures teach, that women did a work in the Apostles' days which was approved and appreciated by them and by the Lord. Yet women usually spoke only at the smaller gatherings; and when Paul said, "Let the women keep silence in the congregations," he probably had reference to the public gatherings at which it was the custom to have more or less debate. In these public debatings, Paul thought a woman's voice would be out of place, and this is the opinion of most thinking men and women to-day, though it has by many been carried to an extreme, forbidding them to pray or teach on any occasion, even in more private assemblies of Christians; this we regard as an error.

God has arranged that the man and woman are representative of Christ and his Bride, the Church, and this rule by which the husband is the head of the wife is always maintained in the Scriptures. And probably this is one reason that men have always been given the more active and public work of the ministry, and women more the work of assisting and more private teaching, yet equally as acceptable to God. So Christ is the active agent in carrying out his own plan. He is the great minister of all, and we as his Church are permitted to be helps meet for his use; to do a lesser part and yet an acceptable part, well pleasing to God.

These remarks are suggested as answers to many inquiries from beloved sisters in Christ who love to tell the blessed story of God's wonderful plan, who yet doubted the propriety of so doing lest they might be in conflict with the inspired teaching of our Brother Paul.

We hope that all such will thus be aided in clearly reading their commission, to declare the glad tidings in such manner as becometh women of the anointed body.

MRS. C. T. R.

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