

AS BECOMETH WOMEN PROFESSING GODLINESS. NO. 2.
DO THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN
CONFLICT?

Our next question, as to whether the duties of Christian women as probationary members of the church of Christ, conflict with their duties in the various natural relationships in which they find themselves – as wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, neighbors and friends – is one of very great importance. But let us first notice what our duties and responsibilities are, in the anointed body.

Like our brethren, we are told that "we are all called in one hope of our calling;" that we are "new creatures in Christ Jesus;" that we are "all one in Christ;" and that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female." (Gal. 3:28.) And the Prophet Isaiah (61:1,2; 2 Cor. 6:1) shows, that all the anointed ones are anointed to preach the gospel – the good tidings of redemption and restitution, and the special high calling and privilege of the Gospel age, to all who have an ear to hear.

Our commission is plain, therefore, and is the very same under which our brethren go forth. And if we ignore it and excuse ourselves, we are certainly slothful servants, proving our unworthiness of the high position to which we are called. The harvest field and the harvest work are before us; and lo, the fields are white, the harvest is great, and the laborers are few, comparatively, though many precious saints are devoting themselves to the work.

The harvest work is not the training of and caring for our families, nor the instructing of the worldly, but it is to seek out the saints already consecrated to God and of meek and lowly spirit, and to acquaint them with the plan of God more perfectly; that as they study it in outline and detail they may discover the blessed truth, that it is now time to lift up

their heads and rejoice, knowing that their deliverance draweth nigh; and that as they more freely receive the truth and partake of its spirit, they may make ready to receive the King in his beauty, and to be united to him as his glorious bride.

This is a work in which every consecrated one should be engaged to the extent of ability. And to do so, if we have the spirit of the Master, that is if we have the work at heart as he has it, we will be willing to sacrifice other engagements to accomplish it, and will learn to so bend and turn and manage our earthly affairs as to make them hinder this first and most important work, as little as possible. This effort to so manage the earthly affairs, and take full cognizance of our talents and apply them to the best advantage in the interests of the great harvest work, is part of the privilege and duty of every steward in the Lord's service. And it is because the Lord desired us to do this that he called us his stewards. He would have us as wise and faithful stewards *study* to show ourselves approved unto him – study our abilities, circumstances and opportunities after we have learned his will, that to the extent of our ability, we may accomplish it.

The duties of the earthly and the heavenly relationships, do not however, conflict. Duties never conflict, though sometimes in our perplexity to discover the exact line of duty, they may seem to. The Scriptures clearly explain, that no matter what may be the circumstances in which we are placed, when called to be the bride of Christ, it will be possible to make our calling and election sure. The straight and narrow path will be made very plain no matter how rugged. If you are called being a servant, you need not ignore the duties and responsibilities of a servant, or esteem yourself too highly to meet a servant's obligations. Fulfill them with dignity and grace; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but with singleness of heart as unto the Lord. – Eph. 6:5-8.

So also, art thou called being a mother, do not count yourself released from the duties and obligations already incurred, or perform

them with the least carelessness or indifference. Study God's methods, plans and precepts, and do your best in applying them to the training of your children, with the single object of glorifying God by training them up to honor and serve and praise him.

Beyond your own family extend your influence for the truth as far as your talents and opportunities will permit, among neighbors and friends and relatives – by word and deed and example, by letters or by printed matter, and by training your children in the love and service of God, to co-operate with you in his work, and to look forward to the good time coming [R1083 : page 6] when full grown, they can engage in it more effectively.

Yet, in consideration of the great harvest work, and of the fact that the time is short for its accomplishment (See 1 Cor. 7:29; also TOWER of Feb. '87), earthly cares and responsibilities *not yet incurred* should be regarded as so many hindrances to the great work to which time and talent are already consecrated. And no entanglements of an earthly character which are likely to hinder or retard our usefulness in the great special work of the hour should be entered into.

The Apostle says, "Let every man [or woman] abide in the same calling wherein he was called," whether the position be that of husband, or wife, or mother, or servant. And though we serve our families or our fellowmen, even more faithfully than before, yet we may remember that "he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman, and likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant." All service, in whatever capacity should be rendered *unto the Lord* – that is with the single desire and effort to please him. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men – serving with eye-service as men-pleasers. – 1 Cor. 7:20-24.

However, the Apostle shows (verse 21), that to remain in the very same position in which we were called, is not always obligatory. If the nature of the contract be such that it can be broken, or in some degree compromised, and that to the advantage of the Lord's work, then it

should be done. – "If thou mayest be made free, use it rather." The marriage contract being one of peculiar sanctity, and solemnly entered upon for life, may never be broken because you see better opportunities for service in other directions – "Art thou bound unto a wife [or a husband]? seek not to be loosed." (verse 27) Yet the Christian husband or wife should not be distressed if, because of his or her fidelity to the Lord, the unchristian partner depart: – "Let not the wife depart from her husband. But if she depart [if it must necessarily be so] let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife....If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him....But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace." – 1 Cor. 7:10-15.

How very plainly the course of the called ones who are already entangled, by what sometimes proves to be one of the most detrimental hindrances, is thus mapped out, while those not so entangled, are warned not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. In other words, we are taught to do the best we can in whatever circumstances we find ourselves when called, unless the circumstances are such as we can control and improve. And we are assured that not the measure of our actual service, but of our faithfulness in the little or great opportunities afforded us, will be the measure of our acceptableness, and worthiness of the Lord's final approval.

The parental tie is another which can never be broken, nor its duties and obligations disregarded until the children **[R1084 : page 6]** have reached maturity. And even then parental interest, counsel, etc., should not be deemed unnecessary. These duties, therefore, the Lord would have us do – not as unto them, to please them, or their friends, or your friends, or the world in general – but as unto him.

We conclude, therefore, that the real duties of Christian women in the various relationships wherein they find themselves when called, do not conflict with other duties of the higher work. God does not expect impossibilities of any, but he does expect great and studious faithfulness on the part of all, especially of those called to be joint-heirs with Christ.

MRS. C. T. R.

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