

[R3768 : page 135]

## **NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE IN CHRIST JESUS.**

– *GALATIANS 3:28* –

THE APOSTLE'S words above are often quoted to prove something that was far from his intention.

We do not blame those who misuse the quotation, nor charge that they are endeavoring to wrest the Scriptures; rather we give them credit for sincerity of intention, but presume that either they are not thorough Bible students or else that in the fall their reasoning faculties have been seriously injured, and that they [R3768 : page 136] have not yet ascertained the defect and learned how to rectify the same so as to have the spirit of a sound mind in an examination of this Scripture. The class we refer to seem to get the impression that the Apostle means that after we have become the Lord's people, after we have made full consecration to him, there is no longer any difference between males and females, that amongst believers the ordinary sex distinctions may be dispensed with, that men may treat the women as though they were men, and women may treat the men as though they were women. This is very false reasoning, a total perversion of the Apostle's intention in the words quoted. Wherever the sex distinctions are ignored there is danger to the morals of all concerned.

The Apostle's argument taken as a whole cannot properly be construed as countenancing any disregard of sex distinctions. The Christian man is to be no less chaste and reserved than when he was a worldly man. The higher ideals of his new relationship with the Lord should make him more discreet, more highminded, more careful every way of propriety and true manliness in word, in thought, and in conduct. The Christian woman is to be no less pure in thought, in word, in conduct, than she was before she came into

relationship with Christ. The Apostle uses the illustration of a chaste virgin. The word virgin signifies pure, and the word chaste implies a very special kind of purity, chastity, discretion – separateness from anything that could sully the spotless robe of Christ's imputed righteousness.

We realize well the sentiment leading to this misunderstanding of the Apostle's words. We concede that the pure love for the Lord Jesus coming into the consecrated heart tends to separate it more and more from the world and the worldly and the sinful, and that the tendrils of the heart's affections naturally seek some other support, some other fellowship, and that the fellowship of kindred minds in Christ becomes the chief attraction. We well understand, too, that while this attraction is to all who are the Lord's, male and female alike, there is necessarily a special sex attraction which is not destroyed by the transformation of our love and affection from worldly to heavenly things. Rather the heavenly mind operating through the human brain will still appreciate the attractions of the opposite sex. We agree, too, that the family relationship subsisting between the members of the Church, represented by the words brother and sister, signify very close and very dear relationship, and that the Scriptures authorize this – that we should regard our Lord Jesus as our elder brother and our Bridegroom, and each other as brethren and sisters in the Lord.

We are not arguing against the proper recognition of these terms of precious relationship; we are not arguing against the proper enjoyment of this spiritual relationship; we are merely cautioning against any tendency to ignore or set aside the differences and barriers which even nature enjoins upon us as between the sexes. Between brothers and sisters of blood relationship there should be indeed warm affection, but never an ignoring of sex distinctions. A sister should always be treated as a sister, a brother should always be treated as a brother, and modesty

and purity should ever guard the happiness of the relationship. And this should be no less the rule amongst those who have become New Creatures in Christ Jesus, to whom "old things have passed away and all things have become new." Rather these should be the more on guard, remembering that the relationship is merely spiritual and not a fleshly one.

This is indeed the consecrated key to the right understanding of the Apostle's words. When elsewhere he declares, "Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit," no one understands him to mean that we have no flesh, and that the flesh must not be recognized and governed and kept under control. The very reverse is his thought, that we as New Creatures are no longer to be guided and controlled by the earthly interests, but especially by the spiritual interests. We have the two standpoints, both true:

(1) From the world's standpoint and from our own actual standpoint we are still in the flesh; we still have its weaknesses and blemishes to contend with, to fight against, to overcome.

(2) From the Lord's standpoint we are no longer human or fleshly beings but spirit beings – that is to say, he is dealing with us according to our new resolution, our new standing as newly begotten creatures in Christ. He is not judging us according to the weaknesses and frailties of the flesh, but according to the desires and intentions of the new mind. But the new mind will assuredly control the flesh to the extent of its ability, and nothing could be more unwise than for it to ignore the flesh and to expose itself to peculiar temptations of the flesh through a misunderstanding of the Apostle's words, "There is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus."

What does the Apostle mean? We reply: The teaching is that God accepts all those who come unto him through Christ without distinctions as to race or wealth or servitude or honor amongst men, or sex distinctions. In Christ we are one – that is to say, from

God's standpoint he treats us as one, and has blessings for each and for all in the divine arrangement. Take the remainder of the Apostle's statement, "there is neither bond nor free in Christ Jesus." He does not mean by this that the slave who comes into relationship as a member of the body of Christ is to be considered a free man, and that he is to use his time, etc., in disregard of his master's wishes. On the contrary the Apostle says, "Art thou called being a slave, seek not to be free." That is to say, Do not consider that freedom is necessary to your spiritual welfare; the Lord is as able to bless you and to bring you off an overcomer as a slave as though you were the master and wealthy.

In some respects indeed the slave position may be more favorable to the attainment of the character necessary to a share in the Kingdom than the position of the Master would be. The slave was to know, however, that the Lord would not take notice of his slavery as **[R3769 : page 137]** respects his hopes for a place in the future Kingdom; he would have as good if not better chance for honor in the Kingdom than if he were the master, because the circumstances of life are really against the rich, the wise, the noble, the great. Likewise the Jew and the Greek: The Jew was not to think that because of the favor granted to his nation in the past that he would still have a preferential place in the Church and in the coming Kingdom; the Greek was not to think that because the Jew had been cut off from favor that therefore he would be disfavored in the eyes of the Lord as respects a place in the Kingdom. Both were to know that God would ignore their natural differences of language, heredity, etc., and reward each according to his faithfulness as a member of the body of Christ, irrespective of birth or station or sex or nation.

We are not discussing the natural differences between males and females; we have discussed that question elsewhere, and shown that the Lord has adapted the one to the other, so that each is the complement of the other. We are not here discussing the

public ministries of the Church, and to what extent these are open to males and females, according to the divine arrangement – the divine Word. That subject we have dealt with elsewhere. We are here endeavoring specially to demonstrate that the Apostle's words in our text have no reference whatever to the earthly interests and associations of the people of God – that they merely relate to our standing before the Lord and our hopes and prospects as respects the Kingdom of glory, to which we have been called and for which we are striving to make our calling and election sure. The Apostle's words comfort us all when rightly understood, assuring us that if we attain a place in the Kingdom it will not be on account of our sex, race or condition as human beings.

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