

[R3826 : page 237]

WOMAN'S RIGHTS AND WRONGS.

THERE are two sides to nearly every question, and the woman question is no exception to the rule. Women have their rights, men have their rights; every creature in proportion to its intelligence has certain rights which ought in justice to be respected. It is a fact, however, that very few men, women or lower animals obtain or can obtain their rights under present circumstances and conditions. In proportion as any one retains the original likeness of God, in which man was created, in that same proportion he will surely delight in granting to others their rights and in appreciating his own rights.

But, alas! all have fallen from that perfect image, that perfect likeness of the Creator. Hence there is in every member of the race a measure of selfishness, combined with various good and bad qualities of the mind, in such various proportions that the race as a whole is declared to be not of sound mind, unbalanced, unjust; and the Apostle declares the spirit of the world in general to be antagonistic to justice, righteousness. Anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, pride, ambition, etc., are all difficulties lying in the way of sound judgment. The Word of God, telling these things, admonishes us to seek the wisdom from above, the mind of the Lord; and that these can be obtained only by the subjection, the mortifying of our natural minds, inclinations, dispositions, and a regulation of our views, etc., according to the divine standards given us in the Bible. What we should seek, therefore, would be the highest Christian standard of thought on every subject, and the Lord's thought, the Lord's Word, should be accepted by all who are his followers as that standard. [R3827 : page 237]

If we look out all over the world we find that practically nobody gets his rights – certainly nobody gets what he considers

to be his rights, his dues, except the very humblest minded, who, overwhelmed with God's goodness and mercy, are ready to claim that they have already received of the Lord, and are continually receiving, far more than they deserve in every sense of the word. These are thankful and proportionately happy. The others, proportionately unthankful and unhappy, constitute the mass of the world of mankind, – including the majority of those who have named the name of Christ.

The Lord urges upon his followers the full "*sacrifice*" of all their earthly rights, assuring them that this will be pleasing in his sight as a testimony to their devotion to him and the rules which he prescribes, assuring them also that it will be to their advantage even in the present life as well as to their eternal advantage. Christians, then, male and female, are those who have made a covenant with the Lord to the effect that their rights as natural men and women will not be considered, not be claimed, not be sought after, not be fought for; but that they will accept from him as an exchange a new nature, with new hopes, new ambitions, whose rights, honors, privileges and dignities will come in completeness at the First Resurrection, when that which is perfect shall have come and that which is in part shall be done away, when they shall be glorified with their Lord.

OUR SYMPATHY AND ADVICE

Few have as good opportunity as has the Editor of this journal to know something of the difficulties which beset the New Creation in their contact with others. He is continually in receipt of confidential communications explaining circumstances and asking advice as to how to best meet the severest trials and difficulties of life which come to the Lord's consecrated ones. As he perhaps has a larger contact with the consecrated than others have, he has proportionately a better opportunity for sympathizing not only with the groaning creation, **[R3827 : page 238]** the

natural man, but also with the New Creation. He well knows, therefore, that injustice is frequently heaped upon wives by their husbands, and almost if not quite so frequently heaped upon husbands by their wives. His general advice to those thus unjustly treated is in the language of the Scriptures, "Have patience, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord," – the establishment of his Kingdom of righteousness, the change to his glorious likeness, draweth nigh. – Jas. 5:7.

After kindly forbearance with gentleness and expostulation, if the condition is at all bearable, endure it, asking the Lord for wisdom and grace necessary. Seek to show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light; seek to show to the companion, by love and gentleness, patience, long suffering and endurance, the power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us richly; seek to take as little offence as possible, and learn more and more to go to the Lord as the great burden-bearer. "Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds," remembering that the time is short, and heeding the admonition of the Scriptures that we resist not evil with evil, nor railings with railings, nor slanders with slanders, nor sword with sword, but that on the contrary, we seek to be fully submissive to the trials of life, in the realization that the Lord himself is at the helm, and will bring a blessing out of each for us if we are in proper condition of heart to receive it.

It is certain that every child of God who is seeking and expecting his rights under "the prince of this world," and from his fallen and blinded neighbors, is walking in darkness on this subject. So surely as the Lord's people are "taught of him" they will speedily learn not to strive for their rights nor to expect them, but to be patient, long suffering and kindly toward the unjust. While properly enough seeking other paths in which they would not be oppressed, and to the extent of their ability and the

proprieties of their case fleeing from those who persecute them and unjustly treat them, they will learn to not only love their enemies but to do them all the good in their power, and to sympathetically realize that much of the viciousness and selfishness and meanness of the world is the result of ignorance and inbred sin – the results of the fall. Proportionately they will be longing and praying, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth," and thus will their present trials and difficulties be working out for them a deeper interest in the coming blessings, assisting them in making their calling and election sure, and in obtaining the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

WOMAN'S SPHERE IN THE CHURCH.

At a time when both men and women are becoming exercised more and more upon the question of their rights and their wrongs, and when the popular side, therefore, is opposed to every restraint of liberty, he who would be loyal to the Lord and his Word on this question is in serious danger of being misunderstood – of being thought an opposer of liberty and rights and an upholder of wrongs. A test of the loyalty of the servant of God occupying a public position is thus forced upon him, and "It is required of a steward that he be found faithful." The Editor of this journal occupies some such position, and desires to be thoroughly loyal to the Master and to his Word. For the doing of this a few have been inclined to consider him an opponent of Woman, and as on the side of those who would degrade and demean the sex. This is most untrue and unjust every way.

Every true-hearted, noble-spirited man is sure to have a high esteem for the opposite sex, especially when the combination includes true womanly gentleness combined with natural talents and gifts and largeness and ability of heart. The natural disposition of a noble man under such conditions would be to bring forward such sisters in Christ to great prominence in the Church. And any

refusal to do this is sure to awaken suspicions of a meanness of disposition amongst both men and women, until the voice of the Lord is distinctly heard from his Word. Then all the true sheep hearken to the voice of the great Shepherd, lose their own wills and sentiments on the subject and accept his message, "My sheep hear my voice and follow me; a stranger will they not follow, for they recognize not the voice of a stranger."

This is the position which the Editor has been obliged to take in the sixth volume of MILLENNIAL DAWN, Scripture Studies. Patiently and particularly he has therein set forth, not his own sentiments, but those which in many respects are the opposite of his own inclinations. He has submitted his will in the matter to the will of the Lord, and as a mouthpiece of the Lord has repeated the message of God's dear Son given to the Church through his specially appointed apostles. Hearing the Father's message respecting his Son, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him," the Editor hearkened also to the voice of the Son saying, respecting his inspired apostles, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth is bound in heaven, whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In other words, the Church is instructed to accept the teachings of the apostles as the direct inspired word of the Son of God himself, – as the Father's Word. Hence, when the Apostle speaks to us respecting the position of Woman in the Church we are not at liberty to dispute his word, nor to controvert it, nor to ignore it. Whoever does so is ignoring the voice of the Spirit and will surely suffer in some manner as a consequence.

We have presented no teaching of our own on this subject. As we have heard the Lord's voice through his apostles we have *merely called attention to their very pointed statements respecting the position of the sisters* in the Church, which is the body of Christ. But while pointing out that the public ministry, the teaching function, was not bestowed upon the sisters, but, on the contrary, was specifically withheld from them, we have in no

sense of the word implied that the ministry of the sisters in the body of Christ is an unimportant one. Quite to the contrary, we hold that they have a very prominent place in the Church, and wield a very wide influence either for good or evil – almost an immeasurable influence – and that they are responsible for that influence as a part of their stewardship, that it be used in harmony with the divine Word and not to the contrary. That in the divine order the males in the Church figuratively represent the Lord, the Head, while the females figuratively represent the Church, the Bride.

This is the course of faithful obedience; and we remember the Scriptural statement that in God's sight "obedience is better than sacrifice," – better than many arduous labors of a public kind contrary to obedience. We trust that all the Lord's consecrated people, both brothers and sisters, will reread very carefully the fifth chapter of DAWN, Vol. VI., bearing upon this subject. We are confident that this question is intended of the Lord to constitute a part of the testing of his consecrated ones in this harvest time. Let us resolve that our own sentiments on the subject, and our expressions and influence with others concerning the matter, shall all be to the best of our ability *the mind of the Lord*, in [R3828 : page 239] full accord with the teaching of *his Word*. "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." – Isa. 8:20.

CONFUSING SOPHISTRIES EXPOSED

It is proper that we should here uncover some deceptive sophistries which are being circulated – that we may assist the Lord's true people to take their proper stand on the subject. One element of these sophistries is the claim that what the Apostle wrote to the Church at Corinth was in view of the degradation of the women of that metropolitan city, the argument being that he would not have used the same language and expressed the same

limitations of the liberties of the sisters in public services of the Church to other congregations, and that his words therefore do not apply at the present time. This is sophistry, false reasoning. The epistles to the Corinthians were not written to the debauchees, neither male nor female, of that time, but to the saints at Corinth, both male and female; and a saint at Corinth meant exactly the same thing as a saint elsewhere, namely, one whose life had turned from sin to righteousness, and who, accepting Christ as his Savior, had made full consecration of all to him.

Indeed it would appear that the Apostle's strictures on woman's sphere came from the opposite quarter – that the Church at Corinth seemed to feel itself superior to the other congregations, and desired to grasp liberties for its women which the other churches never thought of. Hence the Apostle after rebuking them asks, "What? came the Word of the Lord out from you? [Did it originate with you? Are we to look to the Christians at Corinth as the expounders of the message?] or came it unto you merely? [Did you not receive the Gospel as others received it? Do you not admit that you were not the originators of it? You have, therefore, nothing whatever to do with adding to or changing its regulations. As you will see this matter in its correct light you will agree that you should receive the message of the grace of God in the line in which he sent it, and should obey it without thought of alteration or emendation to suit some supposed preferential teachings in your midst]. (I Cor. 14:36.) "The faith once delivered to the saints" is not a variable but a fixed one. Hence the Apostle urges "that ye all mind the same things."

Another line of sophistry used to make void the teachings of the Scriptures on this subject seeks its object by handling the Word of God deceitfully: By taking the statement of Colossians 3:18, twisting it about so as to give it a different meaning from its proper one, and then using that improper twist in connection with all other Scriptures bearing on the subject. The passage in question

reads, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, *as it is fit*, in the Lord." The meaning of these words should be evident to everyone; they are very distinct. They tell the Christian wife that her relationship to the Lord, the liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed, does not annul her relationship to her husband, whether he be in Christ or be not in Christ; and that she still owes to her husband the duty of a wife; that the wife in the divine order is not the head of the family, and that it is the duty of the wife to be submissive (in all matters which do not involve conscience – which would include all matters which would seriously endanger health).

The Apostle points out that this is the fit course – the course which he has elsewhere pointed out to be the proper one also for the natural man or woman; for he distinctly declares that the primacy of the man in the family was established at creation, and that the man was created not to be the helpmate of the woman, but the woman to be the helpmate of the man. This is the fit course in nature; and in this verse the Apostle declared that it is still the fit course as respects the Christian wife ("fit in the Lord") after she has been received into the liberty of the family of God. In other words, she has a relationship of heart and conscience to God and a relationship in the flesh to her husband; and these are not to be understood to conflict but are in full agreement under the Lord's arrangement.

Do you ask how sophistry could change the plain statement of this verse? We reply that it attempts to do so by juggling with the word "fit," and implying that the Apostle means that the wife should be subject to her husband as *her mind tells her would be fit* and proper. Of course the minds of many women would never tell them that it was fit or proper to be subject to their husbands, and according to this false, sophistical interpretation they would be following the Apostle's injunction by violating the spirit of his Word in this text. After establishing this fallacious thought in the

mind – and it seems to appeal to the natural mind of some, – this philosophy which seeks to upset the teaching of God's Word, while apparently remaining loyal to it, proceeds to deal with all the other texts of Scripture which relate to the wife's relationship to her husband, by saying that they must all be understood and interpreted in harmony with this declaration of the Apostle, "if it is *fit*," meaning as the woman sees fit in her judgment and certainly not as the husband would see fit. The Apostle on the contrary is saying that the *submission* of the wife to the husband is the *fit*, proper course "in the Lord" as also in nature.

As before stated, we realize that many women, both in and out of the Truth, suffer great hardships at the hands of inconsiderate and sometimes brutal husbands; and in view of our knowledge of this fact nothing would be further from our natural disposition than to give such advice respecting general submission. Rather, our natural mind on the subject would have been resistance, self-assertion, contending for rights, etc. But as we have learned not to follow our own inclinations and judgment in respect to our own matters, interests and rights, so we have learned and are more and more learning to advise others to most carefully follow not their own combativeness nor their own ambitions in these matters, but that if they would be overcomers and win the crown they should hearken to him who speaketh from heaven.

We surmise that a large proportion of the trouble that is coming upon the world in general will be the result of discontent, which we expect to see increasing year by year until the turmoil of anarchy shall ruin all except those who shall have submitted their wills to the Lord and waited for him to establish righteousness and justice in the earth. We urge upon the Lord's people, male and female, all the fruits and graces of the Spirit, – meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly kindness, love. We assure them, in harmony with the Word, that

whether such conduct on their part be lovingly received and appreciated, or whether it shall bring them increased trials and oppositions and injustice, nevertheless the peaceable fruits of righteousness prevailing in their hearts will bring them the peace of God which passeth all understanding even in the present life, and will prepare them the more surely for the Kingdom and its glories and honors. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, he that exalteth himself shall be abased." "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. For it is written, he giveth his favor to the humble, but resisteth the proud," the self-assertive. – Luke 14:11; Jas. 4:6.
