

HONORING OR DISHONORING THE HEAD

"I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; that the head of the woman is the man; that the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying with his head covered dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is one and the same thing as though she were shaven. For if a woman be not covered let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. – I Cor. 11:3-6.

THERE is something about the above Scripture that seems to wound or hurt some of the Lord's dear flock. We greatly regret this, but the fact does not authorize us to change or modify the Scriptures. On the contrary, it implies to us that where there is a soreness of the heart against some regulation which the Lord has placed in his Word, some false ideas upon the subject resulting from wrong views and wrong practices of ourselves or others, there has been produced a condition of mind which, because of this very soreness, is indicated to be diseased. We have even known a few to be so sensitive, so tender, upon this subject that they felt embittered toward the author of DAWN STUDIES, Vol. VI., because he therein called attention to this Scripture and its evident meaning.

If we find any Scripture which touches us to the quick our attitude should be, not that of opposition to the Scripture nor of opposition to the one who drew it to our attention, but on the contrary we should be grateful that a weakness and sore spot of ours had been brought to our attention, thus enabling us to apply the correct remedies, which would salve the sores and make the Lord's yoke easy and his burdens light. It will not do to say that these were not the words of our Lord, but only those of his

Apostle Saint Paul; for the Lord honored the twelve and their words and prayed a blessing upon us all through them – upon "all who would believe on him through their word." (John 17:20.) He declared furthermore that whatsoever they would bind on earth would be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they would loose on earth would be loosed in heaven – thus giving us to understand that their words would be guided with particularity, so that what they would enjoin we might understand would be a divine injunction, and what they would tell us respecting our liberties in Christ we might understand to be a divine message also. Furthermore we are to remember how greatly the Lord used those channels of blessing for the comfort and edification of his Church. We are to remember how they were specially given to him of the Father as he declares, "Thine they were and thou hast given them unto me, and I have lost none save the son of perdition" – Judas. We see that the Apostle Paul was the divine selection to fill the place vacated by Judas' deflection, and we see that in the Lord's providence through him God has sent to the Church the larger proportion of the New Testament message – the explanation of the divine plan as a whole. True, the words of our Lord and the words of the other apostles have brought blessing to the Church, but in number and in explicitness the words of St. Paul outrank all others. As we have seen, this is true of our Lord's words, because his preaching was before the descent of the holy Spirit, and hence was to those who were not Spirit-begotten and who were unable consequently to appreciate and understand spiritual things. Hence many of our Lord's deeper teachings were given in parables and dark sayings, and these evidently were but partly understood even by the twelve until after Pentecost.

We call attention to this subject afresh, not by reason of any desire to make it more prominent than it already is – not because we wish to force the Apostle's words upon any, not because we wish to condemn any, but because we want to have the

responsibility for these thoughts placed where it belongs, upon the Apostle and upon the holy Spirit back of him, and not upon the author of SCRIPTURE STUDIES. Whoever quarrels with the subject let him know with whom he is quarreling and be on his guard proportionately. No one ever quarrels with the Lord to his advantage. On the contrary, those who with meekness receive the engrafted word which is able to make them wise – these have the greater blessing. The self-sufficient, and all who think themselves wise above what is written, are in a dangerous place. They should understand that now is the trial time, and that humility is one of the tests which the Lord is applying to all of us. They should [R4097 : page 361] remember that our tests are not all the same, but that it is the Lord who by the various testimonies of his Word tries and proves those who have made a consecration to him – not with a view to their stumbling, but to their testing, and if rightly exercised to their greater blessing and advancement in the divine favor.

Let any who are disposed to dispute this Scripture read the entire context down to and including the 16th verse, in which the Apostle declares, "But if any man seemeth to be contentious we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." This is the Apostle's final word on the subject – the Lord's final word through the Apostle. In substance it means this: "I have set before you the truth on this subject, through obedience to which you will have a larger measure of the blessing of God not only in your families and in the assemblages of the Church but also in your own hearts and experiences. By following this course you will make better progress and be the surer of winning the great reward and hearing the Master's 'Well done.' Nevertheless, do not consider what I have said as a law; I am not giving it in that sense. I am giving it as an admonition, as something that will be for your benefit individually and collectively. If anyone is disposed to resent my presentation and to argue the question and to contend about the matter it would better be dropped. Let those who

appreciate my advice follow it and reap the blessings; let those who do not appreciate it follow their own course in this matter – to themselves will be the disadvantage from which I fain would shield them. They will lose the blessing which I fain they would receive by following this advice."

The Apostle's advice respecting the covering and the uncovering of the head is a part of his general teaching respecting the relationship of the husband and the wife in the affairs of the home and of the Church. The man who covers his head in his devotions dishonors his head by showing that he does not appreciate the divine word on this matter. In the home in which the husband does not occupy the place of the head of the family, he is covering his headship; in the home where the woman does not recognize the headship of her husband she is dishonoring him and dishonoring herself in that she thus confesses that she has unwisely married a man whom she cannot esteem as she should – as the head of the home. If men and women professing godliness recognized this principle which the Apostle here enunciates it would, we believe, mean the solving of many domestic infelicities and difficulties; for the wife looking to her husband would thus throw upon him the greater weight of responsibility in the affairs of the home, and as soon as she got accustomed to this she would find a great relief to her **[R4098 : page 361]** own mind – a lessening of the nervous tension which is so wearing, especially upon women. The husband, realizing his situation and his responsibility as the head, should and we believe would generally be more careful than ever to look out for the interests of his wife, his children and all that come properly under his supervision – to not only provide for their temporal necessities, but also to realize an increasing measure of responsibility as respects their higher interests, mental, moral, spiritual. But let us remember that the Apostle has placed the responsibility of this question with each man and each woman in the Church of Christ, and has not made it a matter in which

Brother A may criticize Brother B or Sister B, nor vice versa. To his own master each one of us stands or falls on this and on other similar questions. The more obedient we are the greater our blessing, the less obedient the slower our progress, seems to be the divine rule, and it is increasingly important to us to know this as we are approaching the consummation of this age and finishing our course.
