The Woman Question

By Kenneth E. Hagin

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Acknowledgments

Dr. P. C. Nelson was a Baptist minister and theologian, and one of the most highly educated men of his day when he received the Holy Spirit. In 1927 he founded the Southwestern Bible School in Enid, Oklahoma, which later became Southwestern Assemblies of God College in Waxa-hachie, Texas. He went to be with the Lord in 1942.

It was my privilege to sit under his teaching in the early days of my ministry. I came into possession of some of his mimeographed notes, which have been of great assistance to me in the preparation of this book.

Dr. Nelson could read and write 32 languages, and was an expert in Hebrew and Greek. I heard him say that he considered the A. S. Worrell translation of the New Testament to be the closest to the Greek of any translation available at the time. In his notes were some quotations from the Worrell translation, which I have used, as well as quotations from the commentaries of Marcus Dodd.



Chapter 1
Introduction

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

— 1 Corinthians 14:34-36

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

— 1 Timothy 2:11,12

These words from the epistles of Paul have been a source of perplexity to lovers of the Word of God — in particular to that great and growing company of women who feel a fire burning in their souls which they cannot smother, and who know the hand of God has been laid upon them for service.

In whole Christian denominations, women have been forbidden to teach, preach, or even to testify or offer audible prayer in church, based on these Scriptures. Many conservative denominations allow the women to take only a small role.

Some people would simply brush aside these words from the epistles of Paul by saying that Paul was merely expressing his own fallible opinion. But I believe, because Paul states when he expresses his own opinion, that Paul is writing here under inspiration of the Spirit of God. In fact, he went on to say in First Corinthians 14, *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant"* (vv. 37,38).

The passage commanding women to keep silence in the churches is in chapter 14 of First Corinthians — the great Pentecostal chapter. And who ever saw a Pentecostal church where the women kept silence and were not permitted to speak? I haven't.

In no other churches I know of are women more free to speak, teach, preach, pray, shout, and hold responsible positions than in Pentecostal or Full Gospel assemblies. Yet no louder claim is made to follow the Word of God wholly and solely than the claim of Full Gospel and Pentecostal churches. In fact, that's what is meant by Full Gospel — following the full truth. And in Full Gospel and Pentecostal Bible schools and seminaries, women and girls are found studying the Word of God in preparation for distinctively Christian service as missionaries, evangelists, and preachers.

However, when you just skim over the surface of these Scriptures without going into detail to study them, it would seem that our custom in Full Gospeldom is at variance with the teachings of Paul. Therefore, it is incum-bered upon us either to admit we ignore and violate the Word of God in this particular instance, or we must inter-

pret it in harmony with the practices we permit in our midst.

Was Paul a Woman-Hater?

I have heard some preachers and others in the church world advance the theory that Paul didn't like women, never married, and was in fact a woman-hater. They propose this as the reason he put restrictions on women. Well, Paul was not a woman-hater.

Nor does he advise celibacy as some think he does. He did advise it under the circumstances which existed in that day. Reading First Corinthians 7:25-40 you will find Paul advised celibacy because of what he calls the "present distress" (v. 26); i.e., the persecutions and afflictions to which Christians in his time were exposed, and also for the sake of one's being free to devote himself wholeheartedly to the service of the Lord.

Paul was not against matrimony. You know that from the passage you just read. In Hebrews 13:4 he says, *''Marriage is honourable in all ... .*"

When he gave the qualifications for a bishop, or pastor (First Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-10), he said he should be the husband of one wife, and rule in his household well, having his children well disciplined. If Paul had hated women, or had felt all ministers should be celibates, he would have advised Timothy and Titus to find unmarried men for this most responsible position. But he didn't.

Paul spoke in terms which showed his high regard for womanhood and for the work of women.

ROMANS 16:1,2

1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

> 2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

The Greek word *diakonos,* translated here as "servant," is translated elsewhere in the *King James Version* of the New Testament as "deacon." Some of the newer translations of verse 1 read, "I commend unto you Phebe . . . a deaconess . . . ."

And notice that Paul said to the Church at Rome, and he wrote to the men as well as the women, ".. .*assist her*...." Assist this woman, in other words. Don't just push her aside and take over, but assist her in whatever business she has need of you.

In his warm greetings, Paul does not forget the women of Rome.

> ROMANS 16:3,4
> 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:
> 4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Contrary to the usual custom among us today, even in this modern age, Paul mentions the wife, Priscilla, before the husband, Aquila.

"Greet Mary," he wrote, *"who bestowed much labour on us"* (v. 6).

> ROMANS 16:12
> 12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

From the Greek we know these three individuals were

women. And since Paul said of Tryphena and Tryphosa, *"who labour in the Lord,"* and of Persis, *"which laboured much in the Lord,"* these women had some kind of ministry.

And in verse 13 he said, *"Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.'"*

In an extensive passage (Ephesians 5:21-33) showing how the husband-wife relationship illustrates the relationship of Christ to His Church, Paul takes the occasion to exhort the husbands to love their wives:

> EPHESIANS 5:25,33
> 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ....
> 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself ....

In Colossians 3:19 he wrote, *"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them/'*

Are these the words of a woman-hater? Certainly not!

On the contrary, they show that this great apostle — though denied the sweet refining and inspiring influence, comradeship, and companionship of a godly wife — highly esteemed good women, as well as good men. And if his counsels were only heeded by men, most of the sorrows and woes of good wives would disappear.

The attitude of Jesus toward women is an example to all men. None could ever treat women with greater consideration than did the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Chapter 2
Is the Man the Head of the Woman?

Is the man the head of the woman? This appears on the surface to be the plain statement of the following Scripture:

> 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3
> 3 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.

However, looking at that Scripture in some translations other than the King James will help you see how it is actually in agreement with Ephesians 5:23 which says, *"For the husband is the head of the wife . .. ."*

> 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3 (WEYMOUTH>
> 3 I would have you know, however, that of every man Christ is the head, that the head of a woman is her husband, and that the head of Christ is God.

> 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3 3 But I wish you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the wife is the husband, and the head of Christ is God.

Now, is every man the head of every woman? Assuredly not! A man may be the head of *one* woman — his wife. But he is not the head of *every* woman.

I remember some of the things a fellow preached during a revival meeting in the last church I pastored. He wasn't very studious or he'd have known better. He just skimmed

over the top of the Scriptures, like you would pan for gold.

(Back during the Gold Rush you could go into a stream of water and pan out a little gold dust. But if you really wanted to make a strike and get down where the real gold was, you had to dig for it. In the same way you can skim along on the top of Scriptures — but if you really want to find out what the Bible says, you'll have to dig down into the Word of God.)

I didn't correct this fellow as he preached some of these things from the pulpit. I knew the people would know not to accept it anyway. But even after we got back to the parsonage, he wouldn't let go of the subject.

Finally, I said to him, "Brother, that isn't what that Scripture is saying."

"Oh yes," he said, "it says right here that the man is the head of the woman. Men are the head of women in everything."

"No, no," I said, "Men are not above women in the Lord. If that were the case, women could never be saved unless their husbands told them they could."

He was the type of fellow who is very hard on the women. He always preached about the women. In fact, he was a hard individual. His wife was not a partner; she was a doormat. He walked on her. Most of the time, figuratively speaking, he had his foot on her neck and the necks of their children as well.

"In the first place," I said to him, "you are not the head of my wife. I am."

He had been trying to tell the women, including my wife, how to dress, etc.

So I said, "While we're on the subject, I want to tell you something else. It is none of your business whatsoever

how my wife is dressed. That's my business. And how my wife wears her hair is none of your business, nor is it the business of any other man in the church, nor any other preacher anywhere. It is my business. She wears her hair to suit me, not you. She dresses to suit me, not you. If your wife wants to put up with all your idiosyncrasies, that's her problem. But don't go pushing that off on me or my wife.

"And since you brought up the subject, just lay off of it and don't say anything more about it in this church. As pastor I'm the head of this church locally. Jesus is the head of the Church universally, but I'm the shepherd of this local church and have authority here. (Governments is in the office of pastor.) So don't say another word about the woman business while you're here."

The Greek word used for "man" and for "husband" in the New Testament is the same word, *aner*. The Greek of the New Testament had no separate word for "husband." Likewise, it had no word for "wife." Therefore, the Greek word for "woman," *gyne,* has been translated both as "woman" and as "wife."

Hence, it must be determined by the setting which of these significations should be given to the words in the English passage. For instance, you must tell from the context whether it's talking about women in general, or strictly about wives. Sometimes Paul is talking about women in general — but at other times he's strictly talking about wives. And such passages should be interpreted as relating to the role of a wife.

Our text (First Corinthians 11:3) cannot mean that every man stands in the same relationship to every woman as Christ does to every man. That could not be true.

Christ is the head of the woman just as much as He is the head of the man. If He isn't, then the woman is not in the Church, for Christ is the head of the Church.

It is possible to make the Bible say anything you want to believe. No matter what you want to believe, you can find Scriptures, misinterpret them, take them out of their settings, and make them say whatever you want them to say.

A fellow came up to me recently after I'd made the statement that the man is not the *spiritual* head of the woman.

"Oh, yes he is," he said. "The Bible says so. It says that as Christ is the head of the Church, so is the man the head of the woman." Then he asked me, "Is Christ the spiritual head of the Church?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Then the man is the spiritual head of the wife."

"And Christ is not her spiritual head?" I asked.

"No, He isn't."

"If Christ is not her spiritual head, then she's not in the Church, is she?"

"Oh, yes, yes," he said, "she's in the Church."

"Well," I said, "if she is in the Church, and a member of the Body of Christ, then Christ is her head — and not the man."

Paul was simply illustrating that from the family standpoint — the domestic standpoint — the man is the head of the wife, just as from the spiritual standpoint Christ is the head of the Church. He is not saying the husband is the wife's head *spiritually.* If that were true, the born-again wife of an unsaved man would have no spiritual head. Can you see that? But, praise God, she does have

a spiritual head — the Lord Jesus Christ!

This same fellow went on to say that since the man is the head of the woman, the wife should obey and submit to her husband in everything. He said to me, "Even if a husband tells his wife to sleep with another man, she should do it."

That is stupidity. The husband is not the lord of his wife's conscience — her spirit. Jesus is her Lord spiritually, just as much as He is the Lord of the man spiritually.

The Bible says, *"But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit"* (1 Cor. 6:17). And in the same chapter it says, "*. . . he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh"* (v. 16). The Scriptures use this same terminology, *"and they two shall be one flesh,"* regarding the husband and wife (Eph. 5:31).

Can you see how it is only in the husband-and-wife relationship — in the *domestic* situation — that the husband is the head of the wife? From the *spiritual* standpoint, he or she who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit, with Jesus as the spiritual head. The woman is a member of the Body of Christ just as much as the man is. And Christ is the spiritual head of the woman, just as much as He is the spiritual head of the man.

Every woman can come to Christ directly, without the mediation or consent of any man. I've heard some who say their wives are not even to pray without their consent. That's foolish. Any woman can come to God without the mediation or consent of her husband or any other man. She can come into the same close personal fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ that any man can. In fact, many women are walking in closer fellowship with Christ than a lot of men.

But as a wife, in the natural human relationship, she has a subordinate place in the family. (She does not have a subordinate place in the Body of Christ. And this does not mean that husband and wife are not equal before God.) For the sake of good order in the family, the husband should be the head of the house. No intelligent woman should think of marrying a man who in her estimation is not worthy to take that place.

Great calamities might have been averted if God's order in family government had been accepted and followed. The husband is not to be contrary and lord it over his wife. Rather both are to be helpers together in all which concerns their temporal and eternal welfare.

The husband must carry the greater responsibility; therefore, he should have the higher authority. If both husband and wife are what they should be, the husband will take his place naturally as the head of the family, and it will be a joy to his wife to see him there. No real woman wants a mere echo or a puppet for a husband. It should be the wife's delight to submit her will to her husband's when necessary, rather than make him the laughingstock of his neighbors. There is no escape from the plain teaching of the Word of God on this point.

EPHESIANS 5:21-25
21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.
25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . .

Paul is talking to the whole Church when he says, *"Submitting yourselves one to another...."* (v. 21). Does he mean we're to lord it over one another in the Church? No! It means we're to give in, be agreeable, and get along with one another.

Then in the next verse where it says, *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord,* " does it mean the husband is to lord it over his wife; that she is never to have any say-so? No! It means they are to be agreeable and endeavor to get along with each other.

The same verse (First Corinthians 11:3) which says that the head of the woman is the man also says, "The head of Christ is God." This does not mean Christ is essentially and eternally inferior to God the Father. His eternal equality with the Father is declared in the following passage; note verse 6.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-9

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

But as our Savior, as our Sacrifice, and as our very own Brother, He took a subordinate position and was in all things obedient to the Father and submissive to His will.

The Scriptures beautifully teach that when Christ humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, God

highly exalted Him and placed Him at His own right hand. There Christ ever lives and makes intercession for us.

Likewise, when a man (or woman) submits to the cross and receives Christ as Savior, he is also raised and sits in the heavenlies with Christ.

EPHESIANS 2:4-6
4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus . . . .

Christ is not under God — He *was* under Him — but is raised up and seated beside Him at His right hand. Man — though under — when he was saved and came to the cross and confessed Jesus as Lord, was raised with Christ, and made to sit with Him. It is not a vertical matter, but a horizontal one. The Word of God says that we are heirs, sons of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Joint means equal. And the women are joint-heirs as well as the men.

Jesus prayed, *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us* .. .." (John 17:21). That includes wives who are believers as well as husbands who are believers.

Much of what is heard on this subject of submission cannot be substantiated by Scripture — but takes verses out of their settings and makes them say something they don't say. It makes a woman feel inferior to the man. It makes her feel she should take the place of a slave or servant. It binds instead of loosens. And the Word of God clearly states, "Ye *shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32). It will never bind!

Chapter 3
Must Wives Always Obey Their Husbands?

In this chapter we'll deal with only the last part of our text Scripture and the question: Must wives always obey their husbands?

> **1 CORINTHIANS 14:34**
> **34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.**

For light on this verse, Paul sends us to the law, ".. .*as also saith the law*." The word "law," as used in the New Testament, refers to either: (a) the Ten Commandments, (b) the five books of Moses called the Pentateuch, or (c) the entire Old Testament.

Since there is nothing in the Ten Commandments about the rights of women, Paul must have been referring to the Pentateuch or the entire Old Testament. So why don't we see what the law says. (Sometimes we suppose we know what the law says, interpreting it in the light of our own thinking rather than in the light of what it actually says.)

Right in the beginning, in Genesis, we see that God made man and woman. Both men and women were to subdue and have dominion over everything on earth (Genesis 1:26-28). Wild beasts have the same instinctive fear of women they do of men.

Woman was not taken from Adam's feet, but from his side. She is not to be downtrodden, as in heathen fashion, but to stand at his side in Christian fashion (Genesis 2:21,22).

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone __ " (Gen. 2:18). God knew it wasn't good for man to be without the help and inspiration of a woman. So He made woman as a helpmeet; a helper worthy of him.

Paul recognizes that interdependence in the following passage, which I want to quote from Weymouth's translation, because it makes it clear to our understanding:

> **I CORINTHIANS 11:8,9,11,12 WEYMOUTHI**
> **8 Man does not originate from woman, but woman from man.**
> **9 For man was not created for woman's sake, but woman for man's . . . .**
> **II Yet, in the Lord, woman is not independent of man nor man of woman.**
> **12 For just as woman originates from man, so also man has his birth through woman; but everything comes ultimately from God.**

In the Genesis account of creation, there is no sign of inequality between man and woman.

After the Fall of mankind, however, a curse was laid upon the wife. Isaac Leeser's translation from the original Hebrew makes it plain.

> **GENESIS 3:16 ILEESERI**
> **16 . . .1 will greatly multiply thy pain and (the suffering of) thy conception; in pain shalt thou bring forth children: and for thy husband shall be thy desire, but he shall rule over thee.**

This was both penalty and prophecy. And this curse fell upon Eve, not as a woman, but as a wife.

Women are not subordinate to men. It is a husband-and-wife proposition. Wives do have a subordinate place

in the family. They do not have a subordinate place in the Lord.

The Bible says, ". . .*there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*[11] (Gal. 3:28).

Women are called "sons of God" just as much as men are. John was writing to the entire Church — not just to the men — when he said, *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God* __ "(1 John 3:2).

That verse continues, ".. .*and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* " The women will be like Him just as much as the men will be.

Old Testament Examples

Let's examine some of the husbands and wives as recorded in the law.

Peter cites Sarah as a model wife whose worthy example Christian wives could follow. *"Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement'"* (1 Peter 3:6).

It is possible to lift this one verse out and say, "See, the wife is to obey her husband just as Sarah obeyed Abraham." But does it mean the wife doesn't have any right to speak her own mind? Some would leave the impression the wife never has a right to express her thoughts, that she's under the rule — the obedience — the domination — and is nothing much more than a slave. But that isn't what Peter is saying. Let's see what the law says:

GENESIS 16:5,6

5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee:

I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee.
6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

Here we see Abram letting Sarai have her own way. He isn't dominating her like some warlord.

From the 16th chapter of Genesis through the 21st, there is an account of a disagreement. At its climax, we see that Abraham gave in to his wife's contention, and let her have her own way. And we see that God justified not him, but her.

GENESIS 21:10-12
10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.
II And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.
12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

God told Abraham, one time at least, to listen to his wife. According to this, Sarah ruled her husband on this occasion. And God approved of it. As He always does when a wife is right.

God always approves of right. Some ministers, Full Gospel, Spirit filled, I'm ashamed to say, have told me a woman ought to do whatever her husband says, no matter what.

They have told me personally that if the husband tells his wife to sleep with another man, she ought to do it,

because the Bible says for her to obey him. That is an insult to my intelligence. God will never side in with wrong. And that would be violating one of His Ten Commandments.

One fellow said to me, "If a husband asks his wife to drink with him, she ought to drink with him. If he wants her to go to the bar, she should go."

Another man said, "If an unsaved husband tells his wife not to go to church, she's not to go. If he tells her not to read the Bible, she's not to read it. She is to obey him to the letter."

(These things have been said to me personally — I'm not talking about what somebody comes to me and *says* somebody said. You can understand that these opinions have created no little confusion.)

I say in reply, "Bosh and tommyrot!"

Peter gave Sarah as an example. Let's take it then. When Sarah was right, God sided in with her. God is not going to side in with the husband when the husband is wrong any more than He will side in with the wife when she is wrong.

Thank God for good wives! They don't need to be put down. Oh, I know there are some bossy wives, but if their husbands don't know how to take care of them, let them go ahead and be henpecked! You see, it is the husband's problem. There's no use in downgrading all wives because of a few exceptions. And it is the responsibility of the husbands to take care of that — not the responsibility of the preachers.

If a man wants to be henpecked, it's his business and no one else's. I have no more business trying to manage another man's wife than I have managing some other

fellow's money. We can lay down principles, of course. But I think there are some men who rather *enjoy* being henpecked. If they do — let them enjoy it. I don't like it myself.

Yet I respect my wife, and I respect her opinion. Once she had to put her foot down and speak up to me. God had dealt with me back in 1947 and '48 about leaving the pastorate and going out in a field ministry. He had spoken to me about healing and had given me some instructions about ministering to the sick. It was the burden of my heart.

But I made a mistake. I went to the wrong meeting. (You can make a mistake sometimes going to the wrong church, the wrong convention, or the wrong meeting.) It was a midwinter prayer and Bible conference. Almost every person who preached spoke against healing meetings. And at the last, the man who stood at the head ventured to say that just *one* person shouldn't pray for the sick — just *one* individual shouldn't lay hands on them — everyone should pray and lay hands on them, and then when God healed them He'd get all the glory.

Everything I heard downgraded me. I can understand how women must feel at times — they've gone to church, been put down, and wished they hadn't gone.

After two or three days, I went back home. My resignation had already been submitted, and my wife had been packing while I was away.

"Just unpack," I said, "We're not going."

"You're not?"

"No, I'm not. The church wants me to stay and I'll stay. And another thing — from this moment on, I'm never going to pray for the sick again. I'll never lay hands on

another person the longest day I live. If someone insists on being anointed with oil, I'll get the deacons to come and anoint him."

My wife could see that I was out of sorts. "No!" she said. "We're not going to stay with this church."

I was taken aback. She'd never acted like that in her life. And she hasn't acted that way since. But she needed to act that way on this occasion, and God sided in with her.

"No — I'm not going to unpack," she said. "And yes — we are going to leave this church. And yes — you are going to obey God. That's what you're going to do!"

I stood there speechless. She didn't ordinarily talk like that. But, to tell the truth about it, if she'd let me rule over the situation, we'd have both been in a mess. She was right. And she put a little vigor into me. I went ahead and obeyed God.

Sarah ruled over her husband in the situation we read about — and God approved of it. My wife ruled over me on this occasion — and God approved of it. God always sides in with right. He will never take the part of wrong. If He did, then He would be wrong.

Did you notice, too, that Sarah did not suffer in silence and servile subjection, but spoke her mind as she had a right to do "as also saith the law." It is recorded in the Pentateuch.

The first chapter of First Samuel records that when Hannah, the mother of Samuel, had a little difference with her husband, she spoke her mind and had her way. It proved out to be God's way.

Abigail was a wise woman whose husband was a fool. (There are some cases like that.) The Bible calls him a "son of Belial." By disobeying her husband, she saved a critical

situation and won the favor of David. If she'd listened to her husband, there would have been much bloodshed.

1 SAMUEL 25:32,33
32 And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:
33 And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.

Read the whole story from your Bible and notice that God is standing on the side with Abigail — even though she *disobeyed* her husband.

Obey in Everything?

It is not a sane argument that *every* wife must *always* obey her husband in *everything.* In chapter two I made reference to an incident when a man, a Bible teacher, came up to talk with me after I had said that the husband is not lord over his wife, and that Jesus is her spiritual head. He further said, "Turn to Ephesians 5:24." And then he read to me, *"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in EVERY THING."*

He emphasized as he read, "in every thing."

"A wife," he said, "is to obey her husband in everything."

That's when he said that even if the husband tells her to sleep with another man, she is to do it. He put heavy emphasis on the fact that it didn't specify the husband had to be a Christian husband; it just said the wife was to obey. "Even if her husband is unsaved, whatever he says to do, she must do."

He clung to that one verse to support his views. But the Word of God plainly tells us that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; Second Corinthians 13:1). We must consider the teachings of the entire Bible. We're not to take an isolated text and build some doctrine on it.

I want to repeat: It is not a sane argument to say *every* wife must *always* obey her husband in *everything.* Some men are such brutes they would require things of their wives which should not be granted. If an enraged husband commanded his wife to kill their children, no sane person would say she should obey. Well, if she shouldn't obey that, there are a lot of other things she shouldn't obey — because they are wrong!

A HUSBAND CANNOT COUNTERMAND ANY OF THE LORD'S COMMANDMENTS.

Smith Wigglesworth, a man mightily used of God said, "Under God, all I am in my entire ministry I owe to my dear wife." He went on to tell that when he was a plumber in England growing prosperous from plumbing the old mansions and houses there, he sometimes worked seven days a week. He said he grew cold in spirit, and really just backslid.

Now when you backslide and get out of fellowship with God, you're not so interested in the things of God. And when someone else is, it brings conviction on you.

"You go to church too much," he told his wife. "You're not to go any more. I know enough about the Bible to know the man is the head of the wife. You're to obey me. And I say, 'Don't go to church,' so you're not going."

She smiled sweetly and said, "Now, Smith, you're the head of this house, and you're my husband. Whatever you

say in the house goes. And you know as well as I do that I do not neglect you, the children, or the house in any way. But you are not my lord. Jesus is my Lord. And the Bible tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. The Bible tells me to go to church, and I'm going."

"Well," he related, "I'd fume and fuss and practically cuss. And finally one day I told her, 'If you go tonight — I'll lock you out.' But she went right along — and I locked her out. She didn't have a key and couldn't get in. The next morning I came downstairs, opened the back door, and there she was, all bundled up in her coat, leaning up against the door. She'd been there all night. When I opened the door, she almost fell into the kitchen. But she bounded up, smiled, and said, 'Well, dear, how are you this morning?'

"She was so kind and sweet, but I'd have felt better if she'd chewed on me a little. She didn't, though. She just asked, 'What would you like for breakfast?' And she fixed my favorite breakfast.

" 'AH right, all right,' I said, 'I'm wrong. I missed it.' She had just loved me back to God. But at the same time, she stood her ground. If she had quit church and followed me, we'd have both been in trouble."

I've seen that happen. In the 12 years I pastored I've heard women say, "My husband doesn't want me to come to church. He wants me to go here and do such-and-such. I thought maybe I might win him." And I saw those women backslide right with their husbands. Some did get back into fellowship with God eventually, but I don't remember a one whose husband got saved.

On the other hand, I remember many faithful women in those churches who had bullies for husbands who had

forbidden them to come to church.

One little woman in particular: What a time she had! But if you needed inspiration — if you were trying to preach and the service seemed dead — all you had to do was look at her, and she'd inspire you to preach. Her face was always lit up like a neon sign.

One night my wife said to me, "Honey, did you notice Mary's feet?"

"No, I didn't. Was something wrong with them?"

"Well," she said, "she just had on galoshes."

"Galoshes! It hasn't rained in a month. Why did she wear her galoshes?"

"Joe didn't want her to come to church. He was angry and hid her shoes."

He thought that if he hid her shoes she wouldn't go. But she put on her galoshes and came ahead. I'm certain that if he'd thrown away her galoshes, she'd have come barefoot.

She was a meek little woman, but I remember her saying to me, "I don't want to dominate him in any way. He's my husband and I respect him. He's the father of my children and I teach them to respect him. But he's not taking the place he should take. He isn't interested in the things of God and won't come to church. It looks like I'm going to have to lead in these things. Am I wrong?"

"No," I said, "you're not wrong. You're right."

She stood her ground. Afterwards she told me how she'd said, "Joe, I'm not trying to take any authority away from you. But I'm going to keep these children in Sunday School and church. If they followed you they'd be gambling and drinking. And another thing, we ought to pray at the table. We just sit down and start eating like

a bunch of hogs. Before we eat, I'm going to pray."

She didn't ask him if she could — she said, "I'm going to do it." And the next meal, she did just that. One of the children peeked and told her, "Mama, Daddy just sat there and stared straight ahead like he was mad." But after a few times, he started bowing his head and closing his eyes along with them.

Then she told me how a little later on she said to him, "Joe, we ought to read the Bible in this home, and it should be your place. But you're not doing it, so before we retire every night I'm going to read a chapter and pray with the children. If you're here, you should have enough respect for me and the children to sit down and listen."

She said that sometimes he would listen. But at first, when she and the children got on their knees to pray, he'd just sit there. After a while, though, he would get off his chair and kneel, too.

Thank God she made her stand! As far as I know, every one of her children was a Christian. And someone told me later that old Joe got saved when he was nearly 60.

You never will make it compromising with the devil in any way! We need some balance in these things. A husband cannot countermand any of the Lord's commandments. He is not the lord over his wife's conscience; the Lord Jesus Christ is.

A wife must be true to her convictions even at the cost of losing her husband if he will not endure her true devotion to Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:15
15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

Submission

1 PETER 3:1-7 WEYMOUTH)

1 Married women, in the same way, be submissive to your husbands, so that even if some of them disbelieve the word, they may, apart from the word, be won over by the daily life of their wives,
2 after seeing your daily lives so chaste and reverent.
3 Yours ought not to be outward adornment of plaiting the hair, putting on jewels of gold, or wearing various dresses,
4 but an inward beauty of nature, the imperishable orna ment of a gentle and peaceful spirit, which is indeed precious in the sight of God.
5 For this is how of old the holy women who set their hopes upon God used to adorn themselves, being sub missive to their husbands.
6 Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him master. And you have become Sarah's children if you do right and per mit nothing whatever to terrify you.
7 Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives with a clear recognition of the fact that they are weaker than you. Yet, since you are heirs with them of God's free gift of Life, treat them with honour; so that your prayers may be unrestrained.

The New Testament Greek word translated into English as "submit," "subject," "submit yourselves" is *hupotasso.* It is used in First Peter 3:1, and elsewhere in regard to Christians submitting themselves to one another.

Paul uses it in First Corinthians 16:16, *"That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.*" And in Ephesians he used it, *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord"* (Eph. 5:21,22).

What kind of subjection is meant? Paul certainly did

not mean the brethren were to be slaves to each other, but that they should try to please one another in as far as possible, thus avoiding disputes, contentions, and divisions. That's all he meant when he said, "Submit."

You see, it is a subjection of love to the rule of love.

Chapter 4
Must Women Keep Silence in the Churches?

> *Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*
>
> *And if they will LEARN any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.*
>
> *What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?*
>
> — 1 Corinthians 14:34-36

As we mentioned previously, in the original Greek there is only one word for "man" — none for husband; and only one Greek word for "woman" — none for wife. You must determine from the context whether a text is talking about *women in general,* or specifically about *wives.*

Verse 34, for instance, is not talking about all women. It couldn't be, because the next verse says, *"If they will learn any thing, let them ask their HUSBANDS* ___ "All women don't have husbands. Unmarried women are certainly not included in this text. The Greek word *gyne* should have been rendered here as "wives." *"Let your wives keep silence . . . . "*

A. S. Worrell translates these verses, "Let the wives keep silence in the assemblies; for it is not permitted them to speak, but let them be in subjection, as also says the law. And, if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their

own husbands at home; for it is a shame for a wife to speak in an assembly."

The other famous text on this subject is much like our first one.

I TIMOTHY 2:11-15
II Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.
12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authori ty over the man, but to be in silence.
13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.
14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.
15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Remembering these things about our texts will help you understand them: (1) Paul is not talking about all women, but about *wives.* (2) He is talking about *learning something and asking questions* (First Corinthians 14:35; First Timothy 2:11).

Translate the Greek word *gyne* as "wife" rather than "woman," and these texts will make sense to you. In Timothy, Paul refers to Adam and Eve, a husband and wife. He's dealing with a husband-and-wife proposition.

You see, there is really no great danger of women in general dictating to, domineering, or usurping authority over men in general. But *wives* have been known to subject their husbands to such indignity. And Paul is saying the wife is not to dictate to her husband, or usurp authority over him.

The women in that day had little or no education. Paul advised the wives if they would *learn* anything, to ask their husbands at home — thus implying the men were better

informed than the women.

Alas, this is not always true now. Many women would die in hopeless ignorance of the principles of our holy faith if they depended on what crude, half-baked, pernicious, and fallacious ideas their husbands could communicate to them.

The Law of Scriptural Interpretation

Every Scripture must be interpreted in the light of what other Scripture says on the same subject. It must harmonize with all other Scripture.

Much error has resulted from ignoring this law of interpretation. That's how people have gotten into difficulty on our subject, as well as others. The interpretation we put on our text Scriptures must harmonize with all other Scripture.

You can lift verses out of their settings, ignore the law of interpretation, and make them say anything you want them to say.

There have been some wonderful men, with beautiful spirits of love, baptized with the Holy Spirit, who were great witnesses and blessings to others — for a while. But then they got off into error because they did not interpret Scripture in the light of other Scriptures.

One such man told me how God had brought him a great revelation. (Revelation is all right if it is in line with the Word. If it isn't — forget it.) He thought he had a great revelation which no one else knew about. But some of us have been in Pentecost a mighty long time, and we've seen certain things come up every now and then — and then fall.

Such was the case with his revelation. They'd put

various pretty names on it — Restoration, Eternal Restoration, Ultimate Reconciliation, etc. In essence it was that everything is going to be restored, and everybody is going to be saved. One such group taught that even evil spirits, and possibly the devil, would be saved. And they picked out a few verses of Scripture which they think say that.

Another man, with the same revelation, was so thrilled when he told me what he'd "found out from the Bible." I could tell from his breath he'd been drinking, and he'd curse and use God's name in vain as he talked. But he was so happy and laughed as he told me, "Our preacher preached — and I've found out from the Bible it is true — that everybody's going to be saved. It doesn't make any difference what you do. Isn't it wonderful! You know, the Bible says that with God all things are possible. And the Bible says that God's not willing that any should perish. Are all things possible to God?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Is God all-powerful? all-knowing? all-wise?"

"Yes."

"Can He do anything?"

"Yes."

"Well, He's plainly said He's not willing that any should perish, so nobody's going to perish. Everybody will be saved! I've been so thrilled since I found that out."

A Full Gospel minister who for many years had a real ministry in getting people saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit got off into the same error. "For years," he said, "I thought my alcoholic uncle who died cursing God went to hell. But now I've found out he went to heaven. He's saved because God's not willing that any should perish,

and God's all-powerful. I used to talk to him years ago about accepting Christ, but he'd curse me and send me on my way. He never did make a profession of Christ. But I know now he went straight through to the glory world."

Can you see they use Scripture all right? With God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27). God is not willing that any should perish (Second Peter 3:9). Can God do anything? Is He all-powerful? Certainly! But they belabored the point. They didn't harmonize these Scriptures with other Scriptures.

The Lord Jesus Christ said that some people *are* going to be lost. He said, *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:15,16).

No, the extreme teaching of ultimate reconciliation is erroneous, devilish, misleading, and does damage to the Body of Christ. And I wanted to use it as an illustration.

Coming back to this woman question, can't you see that you can do the same thing with this? When one man tried to make his point with a verse of Scripture he was clinging to, I pointed out to him another Scripture. "Well," he said, "there may have been some exceptions. But this is the way God wants it." No! If an interpretation doesn't harmonize with all other Scriptures, then the interpretation is wrong.

> 1 CORINTHIANS 11:5
> 5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

Paul is talking here about women praying and prophesy-

ing in church. Some people think that to prophesy means to preach. And really it is one phase of preaching. If while you preach you say something under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, you are prophesying. Now, was Paul illogical enough — especially writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit — to tell women they could pray and prophesy (or even preach) in the 1 lth chapter — and then come over to the 14th chapter and tell them to be quiet?

> ACTS 2:16-18
> 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;
> 17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons AND YOUR DAUGHTERS shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:
> 18 And on my servants AND ON MY HANDMAIDENS I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

Hundreds of years before the Day of Pentecost, the Prophet Joel prophesied about it, saying, *"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh*___" (Joel 2:28). Peter said on the Day of
Pentecost, "This is the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy." We still live in that dispensation today — the Holy Spirit dispensation. God has poured out of His Spirit upon all flesh — which includes women as well as men. ". . .your sons and your daughters shall prophesy . . . ." The daughters will prophesy as well as the sons.

As a young Baptist pastor, when I first came around Full Gospel people, I fellowshipped with them primarily around divine healing. I sort of closed my ears to other things they taught, but I knew they had revelation on

divine healing no other churches I knew of had. I'd been healed by the power of God, and had been standing in faith alone — so when I found these people, it strengthened my faith to fellowship with them. As a Baptist pastor I would attend every Full Gospel service I could get to.

Some of my colleagues among the Baptists warned me against these Pentecostal people. One man in particular, a seminary graduate whom I'd known all my life, said to me one night as we discussed it for hours, "You ought to be careful now, Kenneth, about going around those Full Gospel people. I'll admit they're good people. And I'll admit they live stricter and straighter lives than most folks in our own church do. But," he warned, "that speaking with tongues is of the devil."

"Is it?"

"Yes, it is."

"Well now," I said, "it seems a little strange to me that people could have something from the devil and it would help them live better lives. The way I'm able to ascertain it, the works of the devil make people worse — not better."

(I didn't understand speaking with tongues then as I do now, but instead of hindering me, he helped me to see that it must be good.)

"Those Pentecostal people," he went on to say, "have got to be wrong."

"Why?" I asked.

"They've even got *women preachers."*

"They do?"

"Yes. They let women teach, testify, and take a prominent place right in the very church service. And that is wrong."

"Is it?"

"Yes, it's wrong for women to preach, or take the lead in any way. The Bible says, 'Let your women keep silence in the church . . . .'"

"Our women don't."

"Oh, well," he said, "we let them teach over in the Sunday School building, but not in the church."

"That's ridiculous!" I said. "And it's exactly what Jesus said the Jews were doing. They'd say, 'Oh, the Temple is holy here right around the altar — but the rest of it's not holy. You can do what you want to out there. You can sell sheep and cheat people out there.' But Jesus took a whip and drove out the money changers.

"That Sunday School annex," I went on, "is just as holy as the sanctuary. And besides that, as far as having church is concerned, it's where two or three are gathered that they're having church. It's not the building. The building is just a place to meet."

(The church under the New Covenant is not confined to any building. Paul wrote several times, as did others, about the church in So-and-so's house. You can have church in the open air, a barn loft, downtown in a little mission, in a tent, or in a great cathedral.)

Being Baptist, I knew this Bible teacher thought that to "prophesy" meant to preach. And, as I said, there is an element of truth in that. However, *all* prophesying is not preaching — and all preaching is not prophesying. But I knew he thought that when the Bible spoke of "prophesying," it meant preaching. So I said, "Peter quoted Joel's prophecy on the Day of Pentecost that under this dispensation the daughters will prophesy as well as the sons. To prophesy means to preach, doesn't it? Is it wrong for them to preach?"

"Uh-h-h-h. Uh-h-h-h. I'll have to give that a little more thought," he said.

"While we're on the subject," I said, "let me say something else. We send women missionaries, and those women missionaries teach and preach on foreign fields. They teach other women and men as well as children. One of our recent mission magazines told about a mission station where there is no man. A woman is heading it up. Really she's heading up what you'd call a local church, and we've put our stamp of approval on it.

"I believe it's inconsistent to say to them, 'Ladies, you can't talk over here. You can't speak in the main assembly. We won't ordain you. (Some have since been ordained. This was forty some years ago.) You have to be quiet. But we recognize the call of God on your life, so we'll send you to the mission field. You can't teach or preach to men over here, but you can over there.' Then we send them to the front lines, where it's the hardest. What's the difference," I asked him, "of preaching to the heathen over there and preaching to the heathen here?"

> ACTS 1:13,14
> 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.
> 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, WITH THE WOMEN, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

There were 120 individuals — both men and women — gathered together in the Upper Room at Jerusalem. When Pentecost was fully come, the Spirit descended on them

and they were *all* filled and all spoke with tongues — aloud. That Pentecost morning was one glorious morning when the women were not silent!

"Yes," someone might say, "but that was in the Upper Room."

They were having church just as much as you can have church in any auditorium. The room doesn't make the church. It's the individuals gathered together to pray and to worship God that make it church — even if it's in your living room.

There also must have been women present at Cornelius' house. In Peter's account of what happened, he tells how an angel from God appeared to Cornelius and told him, *"Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved"* (Acts 11:13,14).

Now *all* of Cornelius' house consisted of more than just men. It consisted of his wife, sons, daughters, etc. And when Peter came there, they had church. It might have been in their house, but they were still having church. The Word was being preached.

ACTS 10:44-46
44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.
45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.
46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.

Notice that it does not say they heard the men speaking and the women keeping silence. Peter was sent to preach to the entire household, and we can conclude that

since the Holy Spirit fell on *all* them which heard the Word, the women as well as the men spoke aloud in other tongues and magnified God.

Women Who Prophesied

When the Spirit of God came on Mary, the mother of Jesus, on Elisabeth, the mother of John, and on Anna, the prophetess, they did not keep silence. They spoke.

> LUKE 1:39-42
> 39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;
> 40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.
> 41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:
> 42 And she spake out with a loud voice ....

When the Spirit of God came upon Elisabeth, she spoke out with a loud voice and began to prophesy. The Lord gave her a message. When the Spirit of God came upon Mary, she spoke out the beautiful prophecy you can read in Luke 1:46-55.

"Yeah," someone will say, "but that was in the home. It's all right in the home."

When the Spirit of God moves as people worship Him in your home, your living room, or the church building, you're having church. And when the Spirit of God moves, as far as God is concerned, there is really neither male nor female. If the Spirit of God comes on a woman, I 'm not going to tell her to be quiet, are you? If she's preaching a sermon, I'm not going to tell her to hush, are you? To

do so is to do despite unto the grace of God.

LUKE 2:36-38
36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;
37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.
38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

The Bible calls Anna a prophetess, which is simply the feminine form of prophet. Anna was speaking right out in what we would call the house of God.

Paul certainly would not prevent women from speaking messages given to them by the Spirit. For the Lord said, *"Your daughters shall prophesy."* Paul could not countermand the Lord's order by saying, "The daughters shall *not* prophesy," could he? And neither can any other man.

I'm convinced Paul was saying, "I suffer not a wife to teach or usurp authority over her husband." Yet, if the husband were not a Christian, he wouldn't know anything to teach his wife, and she might have to teach him. She might even have to take authority which is not really hers, because children need to be taught in the home. If the husband is not going to take his place and read the Bible and pray with the children, the wife should. And she is not disobeying God by doing so.

But even leaving it as the King James translates it, "I suffer not a woman to teach," it might not have been advisable in that day and in that part of the Roman Empire

for women to teach. In our times, though, even those who take a strong stand for keeping women quiet in the church services have yielded enough to let them teach in Sunday Schools and in public schools.

"Paul means, though," somebody says, "that women should not teach men."

Priscilla and Aquila were Paul's companions in whom he had great delight. And Priscilla, a woman, taught Apollos.

> ACTS 18:26
> 26 And he [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

"Well, it's all right to teach one man," some might argue.

If it's all right to teach one man, it's all right to teach a dozen. That would be like arguing it's all right to steal one dollar, but wrong to steal five.

"They can teach, all right, anywhere but in church."

Who said so? They were having church. The three were gathered in His Name. Jesus didn't specify where they had to be gathered.

> PSALM 68:11
> 11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

This is a prophetic Psalm. It is talking about the Good News — the Gospel — and the day in which we are living. It has troubled some of the opposers of the ministry of women to know that the Hebrew word translated "company"

is feminine — and not just a word of feminine gender, but a word which means women.

Here is the way the Isaac Leeser translation from the original Hebrew reads:

> PSALM 68:11
> 11 The Lord gave (happy) tidings: they are published by the female messengers, a numerous host.

After all, the first one to go tell — and *to preach* means *to go tell* — the good tidings of the Resurrection of Jesus was a woman. Jesus told her, "Go tell. . . ." They've been telling it ever since — and they should keep on telling it.

Should Women Answer the Call?

"Would you sanction the full ordination of women to the Gospel ministry?" some would like to ask. "Can they fill the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher?"

We read about Anna, whom the Bible calls a prophetess. It doesn't just say that she prophesied — it calls her a prophetess. There is a difference.

I personally — and this is my *opinion* now — do not see any harm in a woman filling any of the offices in the church. However, I do believe it would be a little more difficult for a woman to stand in the office of pastor. Yet I realize God would use them here.

An elderly friend of ours, an ordained Assembly of God minister and evangelist for years, told my wife and me the following experience.

She said, "We owned quite a bit of vacant land behind our house, and in the summer I would put up some chairs

and hold an open air meeting. Many people on our side of the city came and were saved. And because I had more or less led them to God, we just kept on going and built a church building. As soon as it was running real good, almost 200 in Sunday School, we turned it over to the Assemblies of God. I really don't believe in women pastors myself, but because I had evangelized and they were saved under my ministry, it was easier for me to get the church built.

"A little while later, during World War II, the District Superintendent of the Assemblies came to me with a request. You remember how it was during the war, when people would move away from smaller cities to larger ones to work in defense plants. He said to me, 'We've got a new church building over here, and nearly all the congregation has moved away. There's just a handful left, and they can't support a pastor and make the payments, too. It looks as though the district is going to have to make the payments or lose the property. Would you take that church?' "

This couple was in the insurance business and had an income of their own. She wouldn't have to depend on the church for support, so she told him, "Just in this emergency I'll take it for a while. I don't believe in women pastors, but I'll submit myself to you brethren of the district and to my husband, and I'll go there."

It wasn't far from her home. All she had to do primarily was preach to the small group that was left. But God began to bless, and it began to grow. There were only a dozen people when she went there, but soon the building was full. And the district didn't have to make any of the payments.

She said, "Many people were saved there, but I

wouldn't baptize them. A neighboring pastor would come and baptize them. I didn't preach any funerals, either."

You see, she preached and taught under the anointing of the Spirit of God — and God used her. But she didn't usurp authority or dictate to anybody.

Another woman minister, now retired, was an evangelist mightily used of God. Her husband was not a minister; he was a contractor. She was preaching before he married her. He built houses and became quite wealthy. She built churches. She would go into small towns where there was no Full Gospel church, set up a tent, or have an open air meeting. She could win the lost. The touch of God was upon her. Hundreds of people were saved through her ministry, and I can think of about seven churches which are still going today that came into being through her ministry.

"That's all wrong," someone might protest.

If it was wrong, I'm sure God will forgive her for getting hundreds of people saved and seven churches going! But, no, it wasn't wrong. She had the call of God on her and the ability to preach where others didn't. She went in, people were saved, and then a church was established. Her husband would oversee it and build a church building. She would stay until it got going, sometimes a year, sometimes two. (The Apostle Paul sometimes stayed with a group as long as three years.) Then she'd turn it over to a man as pastor and go on elsewhere.

She said, "All I did really was preach. We had a board of men and my husband met with them. He even took all the preliminaries in the meetings."

She wasn't usurping authority over anybody.

P. C. Nelson (see *Acknowledgments),* whose notes on

this subject have been invaluable to me, said:

> I believe it is usually best to have godly gifted men at the head of our churches and institutions. But if such cannot be found in sufficient number, let us call the sisters into action. Think how many splendid works have been built up by the sacrifice of the consecrated efforts of godly women without much help or encouragement either from men.
>
> Shall heavy hands be laid on such women as God has evidently called and endowed with natural gifts and Gifts of the Spirit? If God hath called them — who are we to recall them? Let God send them forth — because He's the one who did it. And when He gets ready to call them in, let Him call them in. I think some men think that they are God — but they are not, and they need to find that out.

Then Dad Nelson gave this advice, which I think is splendid:

> To our sisters who are preaching, teaching, and even serving as pastors, evangelists, and missionaries, we would venture this counsel. When possible, get a brother to do the baptizing, and be content with whatever place the Lord opens for you. Serve Him humbly, and sweetly, and faithfully there, until He calls you off the field.

Chapter 5
Must Women Have Their Heads Covered in Church?

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.

Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

But every woman thatprayeth orprophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

For if the 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.

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

— 1 Corinthians 11:3-16

A hasty reading of this great text would lead one to believe that Paul laid upon all women everywhere, and for all time, the command to wear the veil, or to keep their heads covered in church services. Many conscientious women today fear to remove their hats in church lest they violate this passage.

The crux of the matter hinges on this question: Is it binding everywhere and for all times? Let's examine this Scripture carefully, for if it binds us now, we should obey it.

Upon what does Paul base his argument for women covering their heads in a religious service? First, he does not say it is *irreverent.* Nor does he say it is *displeasing to God.* If he had, there would have been no escape from this command.

Deference to Head

In chapter two we discussed what Paul said about husbands being the head of their wives. This is the basis of Paul's argument. Again we'll read it from Weymouth for clarity:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:3-7 WEYMOUTHI

3 **I would have you know, however, that of** every **man**

Christ is the head, that the head of a woman is her husband, and that the head of Christ is God.
4 A man who wears a veil when praying or prophesying dishonours his head;
5 But a woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head, for she is exactly the same as a woman who is shorn.
6 If a woman will not wear a veil, let her also cut off her hair. But since it is a dishonour to a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, let her wear a veil.
7 For a man ought not to have a veil on his head, since he is the image and glory of God; while woman is the glory of man.

In our country, we instinctively sense the impropriety of men covering their heads in religious services. I've been in services where a man would come in and sit down with his hat still on, and one of the ushers would go to him and ask him to remove it.

Among the Jews, however, the opposite custom prevails. In Jewish synagogues even now, men are required to keep their heads covered.

When we visited the Muslims' holy place in Jerusalem, we pulled off our shoes and left them at the door. In Muslim countries, the worshippers remove not their hats, but their shoes. The Lord said to Moses, "... *put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground"* (Exodus 3:5). Nothing was said about his headgear.

Why, then, does Paul protest against men praying or prophesying with heads *covered"!* This will come out clearly later, but suffice it to say here that the veil, or covering, was an acknowledgment someone visibly present was his "head."

Paul said a woman who prayed or prophesied with her

head *uncovered* dishonored her "head." He didn't say she dishonored God, but her head, her *husband* who was present.

The veil was a symbol of subjection to her husband. So thoroughly was it recognized as a badge setting forth the wife's private and subordinate position that a significant rite in marriage was the assuming of the veil.

(Marcus Dodd said, "The laying aside of the veil was therefore an expression, on the part of Christian women, that their being assumed as members of Christ's body raised them out of the position of deference and subordination ... ." (For further information, *see Acknowledgments.)*

This is the significance of the bridal veil still worn at weddings. And the custom of "taking the veil" lingers in the ceremony of those becoming a nun.

The Greek word *exousia,* translated "power" in verse 10, is also translated variously as "authority," "liberty," and in the plural as "authorities" and "potentates." Let's paraphrase that verse, which sounds so strange to our ears, like this: "For this reason (because of the facts stated in verses 8 and 9) ought the wife to have a sign of her husband's authority, a covering on her head, because of the angels."

Here again, it is not a woman question, but a husband-and-wife question. Out of deference (honor) for Christ, the man should not cover his head. Out of honor for her husband, a wife should cover her head — and also out of deference for the angels who were recognized as present at public worship, and who would be grieved with any disorder.

A. S. Worrell *{see Acknowledgments)* says, "The angels are ministering spirits, and, as being present in their

ministry, .. . they would be shocked, if a woman should get out of her place, and attempt to assume lordship over the man."

In Bible times, more regard was paid to the presence and ministry of angels than is today. It might have a wholesome effect on our assemblies and prayer groups if we were aware of the presence of these heavenly messengers. They are present. The Word of God says so.

In the Church Covenant familiar to Baptists is found this expression, "We do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant," recognizing that angels are present.

Deference to Social Custom

The next reason Paul assigns for women appearing in church with heads covered is out of deference for social custom. Notice what he says in verse 16, ".. .*we have no such custom ... .*"

". . .*But if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered"* (v. 6). Paul was saying that to appear in the public church service without her head covered amounted to the same thing as appearing with her hair cut or her head shaved. That was contrary to the prevailing custom in Corinth.

Marcus Dodd said on this:

> Among the Greeks it was a universal custom for women to appear in public with their heads covered, commonly with the corner of their shawl drawn over the head like a hood. Now, accordingly, Paul does not insist on the face being covered, as in the eastern countries, but only the head. This covering of the head could be dispensed with only in places where they were secluded from public view.

> It was therefore the recognized badge of seclusion. It was the badge which proclaimed she was a private, not a public person — finding her duties at home, not abroad; in the household, not in the city. Both sexes looked upon the veil as the truest and most treasured emblem of woman's position.

In our day, in our land, this is not the custom. A woman does not appear to be more modest if she wears a veil or hood on her head in public. True womanly modesty is recognized now as much by the frank, unassuming manner, the open countenance, the sincere look of the eye, as it was in the days of Paul in Corinth by the wearing of the veil.

Virtuous married women wore on their heads such a badge of subjection to their husbands. A woman with head uncovered appearing in the church in Paul's time in Corinth would have scandalized the church. *Strangers would have thought such a woman was an immoral woman of the city!* Such conduct would reflect on her and on her husband. It would have dishonored her head, her husband.

American Customs

We have our social laws and customs, too. At the turn of the century, right here in North America, it was a custom in most churches for the men to sit on one side and the women on the other. I've been in the ministry nearly 50 years, and a number of years ago I preached in churches where this custom still prevailed. A man didn't dare sit on the women's side. And a woman didn't dare sit on the men's side. It was their custom. And you'd better abide by it, or they would think you were out of line.

At a much earlier date, the history of the First Baptist

Church in Boston tells of an incident where the deacons went outside to confer as to what should be done with a bridegroom who had come in with his bride and was sitting with her on the women's side.

They decided drastic action must be taken. So they went down the aisle behind him, grabbed him by the neck, and threw him out. He had violated their custom.

Donald Gee was a great pastor and Bible teacher. He served as a member of the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God in Great Britain and Ireland. He traveled extensively in Pentecostal work throughout Europe, Africa, Australia, the Orient, and North America.

In writing of his early experiences back in the late 1920s and early 1930s, he told of arriving in a certain country where he was to conduct a teaching mission. The missionary was not there to meet him. He had sent in his place one of the natives who spoke English.

"Just wait here. The missionary will be here. He was unavoidably detained," the native said.

Gee said that it was quite cool, and since they were waiting out in the open, with no place to sit or take cover, he was cold.

"I got pretty cool," Gee said, "so I walked around and stomped my feet to get the blood circulating and try to keep warm. I walked up and down until I warmed up a little. And as I walked I began to whistle a religious tune. Then I noticed the native was staring at me out of the corner of his eye."

Finally the native said, "I wouldn't do that if I were you."

"Do what?"

"Whistle."

"What's wrong with whistling?"

"In this country it is considered vulgar to whistle. If any of the congregation heard you, no one would come to hear you preach."

Gee wrote, "I had to abide by their custom while I was there. I soon learned — and as I traveled over the world I would look with anticipation to the next country to find out what I could do, and what I couldn't do."

If you're to be an effective witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, you pretty much have to abide by people's customs. I'm certain that if we had such a custom now of the wife's wearing a veil, it would be unwise to ignore it. If people generally considered it immodest, it would certainly be wise for those seeking to advance the cause of Christ to conform to the custom. *A breach of the unwritten laws of society has rendered the ministry of many a preacher fruitless.*

At the close of World War II, one of the leaders of an American Pentecostal denomination went to Germany to meet with the leaders of the Pentecostal movement there. They had a small banquet-type meeting to discuss plans for establishing revival centers.

The American said, "It was their custom to drink a small glass of wine before meals. They weren't winebibbers; it was just their custom. But it wasn't our custom, and I was rather bound by my conscience. *What am I going to do?* I pondered. Finally, the Spirit of God said to me, 'The Word says to eat and drink whatever is set before you and don't ask any questions.' So I sipped along on the wine."

About that time, he said, the leader of the German Pentecostal group leaned over and whispered into his ear,

"They tell me that some of the saints in America drink *coffee."*

He said, "Of course I drink coffee myself, but I found myself turning to her and saying, 'Sister, I'm sorry to say, but they do.' "

While he was there he couldn't drink any coffee; it would violate their custom.

I like the way Weymouth's translation says it: "But if any one is inclined to be contentious on the point, we have no such custom, nor have the Churches of God" (v. 16).

In other words, Paul is saying that the Church is abiding by the custom of the land.

PauVs Appeal to Naturalness

Paul makes one more appeal — to our sense of naturalness. *"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her...."* (1 Cor. 11:14,15).

Again Marcus Dodd's comments are enlightening:

> By nature woman is endowed with a symbol of modesty and retirement. The veil which signifies her devotement to home duties is merely the artificial continuation of her natural gift of hair. The long hair of the Greek fop . . . was accepted by the people as an indication of effeminate and luxurious living suitable for women . . . unsuitable for men.

Notice again that Paul didn't say God said it. He said, "Does not even nature . . . ." He goes to nature to prove a point. Small wars have been fought and churches disrupted over the question: Does the Bible teach that

women should have long hair?

How long is long? And how short is short? I pastored 12 years. And somehow I got by in certain places, even though my wife didn't have long hair like the other women did. They would take their long hair and twist it up tightly on their heads in a knot. But my wife's head was more covered than theirs. No matter how long their hair was, it didn't *cover* their heads. My wife's head was covered.

Paul appealed to naturalness. When a woman's hair is longer than men ordinarily wear their hair, then you can tell she is a woman. We can tell from pictures of certain periods in history that men wore their hair longer than we ordinarily do today. But, at the same time, women wore theirs a little longer than that. The men's hair was still short by the standards of the day.

I would say this: I don't think it is good for any Christian man or boy to be the least effeminate. The Word of God speaks against it.

The wise man in Ecclesiastes said, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"* (Eccl. 12:13).

So let's sum up Paul's points:

1. He does not say it is irreverent for women to appear with heads uncovered. He doesn't even insinuate it.
2. He does not say it displeases God.
3. He does say it is the *custom.* And it is wise to abide by the custom.
4. He appeals to naturalness.

Paul dealt with principles of universal application. But as times and customs have altered in regard to feminine proprieties, I see nothing in this passage to prevent women

appearing in public with heads uncovered here in our country. But if you were in another place, and that were the custom, I would encourage you to abide by it.

Chapter 6
Proper Dress and Adornment for Christian Women

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefaced-ness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.

But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

— 1 Timothy 2:9,10

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands.

— 1 Peter 3:1-5

Our Lord Jesus Christ has authority over us. And because He is our Lord, He has authority to regulate our

apparel as well as everything else pertaining to us.

These Scriptures deal with a temptation which — while men are not immune to it — makes its strongest appeal to women. For this reason women are singled out by Paul and Peter for these particular counsels.

In our day we have seen that fashion has a greater power over many women than does a sense of modesty. Even worldly men have been shocked by the scantiness of the clothing worn by many women professing to be Christians. It is to be deplored that many women adopt fashions designed for and by people of questionable character rather than by those who seek to live for the glory of God.

I do not see that either Paul or Peter is laying down strict, ironclad rules — but there is a principle involved.

"But Peter told women not to plait their hair or wear gold," some will argue. (According to my research it was the custom to spend much time plaiting the hair and working gold and trinkets into it.) "He told them not to fix their hair," they conclude.

I agree with Rev. O. B. Braune, now gone to be with the Lord, who was for more than 40 years pastor of the Rosen Heights Assembly of God Church in Fort Worth. He said, "I teach the women to dress up and look nice for themselves and for their husbands. I say to them, 'You had to look nice to get him, and you'd better look nice if you want to keep him.' "

Peter wasn't saying DON'T. Because if he said, "DON'T plait your hair," and if he said, "DON'T wear gold," then he also said, "DON'T put on clothes."

For he said, *"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold,*

or of putting on of apparel.. .. " (v. 3). And of course we know he didn't tell them not to wear apparel, or clothes.

Because of the temptation to women in this area, he is saying, "Don't spend all your time on your hair. Don't spend all your time on fixing up. Don't spend all your time on dresses and clothes." (If some Christian women spent half as much time praying, fasting, and seeking God as they do on their hair and clothes, they'd be spiritual giants!) Peter is trying to strike a balance here.

We need balance. The Church has a tendency to get into a ditch on one side of the road or the other. We don't need to go to the extreme either way — we need to go down the middle of the road.

Peter's point is: Don't spend all your time on the *outward man.* But see to it, first of all, that the *inward man* is adorned with a meek and quiet spirit. If you will tend to the man on the inside first, you won't have to worry so much about the fellow on the outside.

When I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit in 1937 and came among Pentecostal people, the Full Gospel churches were more strict than they are now. Almost all the women, because they were taught to do so, had long hair.

One woman evangelist caused an uproar when she cut her hair, or "bobbed" it, as they called it then. Some may not understand this terminology, but Texans and Oklahomans will get the picture when I say the people threw conniption fits.

The woman minister said, "God told me to do it."

"But the Bible says right here," they'd confront her, "for a woman to have long hair."

"You see, though," she said, "there are other Scrip-

tures. (Scripture must be interpreted in the light of other Scripture.) I saw that Peter said, 'Don't spend all your time on your outward man — on your hair — but see to it first of all that the inward man is adorned with a quiet and meek spirit.' It dawned on me that I was spending too much time on my long hair, trying to keep it looking nice. Since I've cut my hair, I just run a comb through it, and I'm finished. I can spend my time with my Bible and in prayer. Really, I'm more spiritual and have a closer walk with God than before. I was spending too much time with the outward man."

There is a balance to be struck here. I would say this, that those women who preach the Gospel should be especially careful to avoid even the appearance of evil or immodesty. (It might be wise for those who take some place of leadership to lean a little to the conservative side in dress and deportment.)

Paul counsels women, in lieu of going to excess about these things, to have good works. You can readily see that if a woman spent too much time in some of these areas, she wouldn't have time for good works. Peter counsels adorning of the inward man. It takes time to adorn the inward man. It comes down to the battle within all of us between the flesh and the spirit.

I don't think we need to lay down ironclad rules and a list of dos and don'ts. Nor do we have the right to force our opinions and ideas on others.

I was always very conservative. It took my wife the first ten years of our marriage to talk me into the notion of wearing a wedding band. I just didn't care for rings. But I didn't have any convictions about others wearing them — it wasn't any of my business. I'm not to regulate

your conscience; you are. That's between you and God. Let every man work out his own salvation. Oretha finally talked me into wearing a simple gold band, and at Christmas she gave me one. I started wearing it — and I grew to like it. It wasn't long before I said, "I'd like to have another one." And she got me another one. (Sometimes we're a little prejudiced about something, and then we find out it wasn't nearly as bad as we thought.)

I never did care for the earrings ladies wear. I wasn't mean about it; I expressed my desire in as loving a way as I could, and my wife didn't wear earrings for the first 25 years of our married life. But I finally told her to do what she wanted, and wear them if she wanted. You see, that just amounted to *my* likes and dislikes. I didn't see that God particularly cared. After all, I saw that God saved people in Africa and baptized them with the Holy Spirit while they were wearing rings in their *noses!*

Sister Maria Woodworth-Etter was an outstanding minister during the early days of the Pentecostal movement in this century. Born in 1844, she began her healing ministry in 1885. When she was 70 she had a tent which would seat 22,000, and she preached without a public-address system.

I saw a 1911 issue of the *Dallas Times Herald*, and right on the front page it said concerning her meeting, "Take your umbrellas down, boys, and come out to the tent meeting at Fair Park. God is healing the sick like He did in the days of Jesus and the Apostles."

It went on to tell how person after person was healed, and how the doctors of the city were examining them before and after. Some of the most amazing miracles you've ever heard of occurred in her meetings. That woman

was a powerhouse for God.

But she didn't even enter the ministry until she was older. God had called her to preach as a young woman, but her church said that women ought to keep silent — and she wouldn't obey God and thus got out of His will. She suffered many things. Five of her six children died. Did God kill them? No. But because she was in disobedience, the devil could. Her first husband died. And finally, when she was almost 50 and near death herself, she said, "All right, God. I'll do it. I don't care what the men say, what the church says, or what anyone says. I'll go preach and pray for the sick." Then things began to go well for her.

Because she was one of the leading Pentecostal ministers of the day, though not associated with any particular group, she was invited to speak at the biannual General Council meeting of the Assemblies of God in the Stone Church in Chicago. I read her sermon, and I thought as I read it, "1916 — but how well it would fit today!" She spoke to these leading Full Gospel preachers about riding "hobbyhorses."

"So many preachers," she said, "get off onto one thing and ride it like a hobbyhorse. Some get off on women's dress. That's all they ever preach about — and dressing one way or the other will not get you to heaven, or send you to hell. You need to preach Jesus, get the people saved and filled with the Holy Ghost, and let the Lord tell them what to do.

"Don't fight other denominations. Don't fight fellow Christians," she advised. "Just preach Jesus, the Cross, the Blood, and the Resurrection. I've learned God will meet people I never thought He'd reach, because their hearts are hungry. I don't preach against anything. I preach for

something."

Bob Buess was a Southern Baptist home missionary to the Spanish-speaking people in the southwestern part of the United States when he received the Holy Spirit. He published a book in 1974 called *The Pendulum Swings.* The purpose of his book, he states, "... is to cause people to slow down and look at the other side of different issues. It is to let the pendulum swing back into the perfect will of God rather than to be hung up in dogmas and legalism."

I quote from chapter 5, entitled "The Pendulum Swings Back into Line on Attitudes Toward Women's Dress," and Bob's comments on First Peter 3:3,4:

> You must understand that women are instructed to put emphasis on the hidden man of the heart rather than extremes in dress.
>
> **IS IT TRUE THAT A WOMAN CANNOT WEAR PANT SUITS?**
>
> No, this is not true from a strict interpretation of the Word. Pray about it. Let the Lord guide you in this. Here is actually what the scripture says about it.
>
> **DEUTERONOMY 22:5 "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God."**
>
> The scripture speaks of women staying away from men's dress, and, likewise, the men are to abstain from wearing women's clothing.
>
> Some homosexuals like to put on women's clothes. They like to impersonate women. It is my opinion that this was the problem rather than the simple act of wearing the clothes of the opposite sex.
>
> One thing is certain, the woman should be a woman whether she has on slacks or a dress.
>
> Tradition says that women should not wear pants.
>
> The Bible says nothing to this effect.
>
> If you are working with a group of people who have

another view on women and pants, then you need to conform to them lest you be a stumbling block to them.

If you feel that you cannot conform, then you should pray about moving to another group who shares your convictions.

By the way, women's pant suits are not men's clothing. Also, in Bible days, the men wore skirts, and the women wore the pants. Perhaps the women need to have the pants and the men need to take the skirts. (On second thought, I'd rather not . .. .)

It is very important that you follow your peace. Some have a strong background teaching against women wearing pants. Wear what your society permits you to wear, but do not try to force your views in a dictator spirit on someone else. You can share your convictions, but do not demand.

1 PETER 3:3,4 "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart... even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit »

Here women are admonished to put the emphasis on the hidden man of the heart. They are to be tender and feminine. They are to have a gentle and quiet spirit.... let there be an emphasis on the humble spirit rather than on the dress . . . Some of the so-called 'holy' women, as far as dress is concerned, are some of the meanest women in the world. They seem to develop a holier than thou spirit.

A missionary couple lived in what is now known as the land of Israel from 1900 to 1935. When they came back they wrote on Bible land customs. Many strides have been made in that land since Israel came back, but when this man and his wife were there, more of the ancient customs prevailed.

He pointed out, "We've tried to interpret the Bible in the light of the western mind, and it is an eastern book. We have learned that some Scriptures which mean one

thing to us, among these people are interpreted in exactly the opposite way. One thing I've found which appalls me is that in America, when we've come home on furlough, we've seen pictures of Christ, and in them He's wearing women's clothes. The artists have him in a robe, all right, but the difference is in the color. There are certain colors men never wear — they belong to women. Some of the people who protest most loudly about women wearing certain attire have a picture in their own homes of Jesus wearing women's clothes."

In commenting on First Timothy 2:9, which is one of our texts, Bob Buess says, "Actually, the scripture deals with extremes. It cautions about excesses. Ornaments, etc., are denounced rather than the type of clothes. Some women who are heavy on [wearing] ornaments treat women in pant suits as if they were snakes. To say the least, such women should be consistent with the scripture."

It is easy to become inconsistent. I've been in places where they wouldn't allow pearls or ornaments to be worn on the dresses. But they would do up their long hair with ornamental pins sticking out all over. This amounts to saying, "It's all right to wear ornaments on your head, but not from your neck down."

I've known preachers who wanted to tell all the women just how to dress; it was their main subject. Their poor wives were hardly permitted to look decent. They had to wear their hair long and couldn't use a speck of makeup. But those same preachers dressed up and looked nice. When they went out, their wives looked like their mothers!

Chapter 7
Conclusion

Missionaries tell us that in the eastern countries — especially before World War II — the poor, illiterate women were not able to comprehend fully the meaning of the Gospel message.

They frequently would interrupt the service with foolish and irreverent questions. They would speak right out and ask such things as the cost of the missionary's dress, or the purpose of some article of attire.

It may have been that Paul directed some of his restrictions against a similar state of affairs in Corinth, where history tells us the women as a class were kept ignorant.

When I first came into Pentecostal circles, I read with great interest the writings of Charles E. Robinson. He said, "I think you could say and prove that there are absolutely no scriptural distinctions as to carrying on worship, or business either for that matter, which are based on sex. With God, there is neither male nor female, just folks .... The distinction God makes is not one founded in sex, but one founded in marital status."

When it comes to the Church — when it comes to spiritual things — when it comes to the Body of Christ — there are no distinctions between men and women. As far as God is concerned, there are none.

That's where many have missed it. They've made it a man-and-woman proposition — when it is not. It is a husband-and-wife proposition.

The man is not the head of the woman in the church. The husband is the head of the wife in the home.

GALATIANS 3:26-28
26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
28 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.