

DUTIES OF WOMEN

Parley P. Pratt

A certain Elder writes us, 22nd of June, "If you would set forth the duty and standing of women in the church, in one of your numbers, it would be of some use to us, as some of our sisters feel a little disposed to get out of order."

It is clearly implied in the above statement that the *sisters* referred to *know* what their *duty* and *standing* is; (for how could they *feel disposed to get away from a thing they were ignorant of?*) and the *Elder* also must have *known* their *duty and standing*; (or else, how could he have been qualified to *bring* such a *charge against them?*) and knowing these things, why does he ask *us* to *set forth* their duty?

Leaving this question for the Elder to answer, we would refer him, and all Saints, to the sacred writers for further information on this subject. Paul gave his opinion on this matter, when writing his first Epistle to Timothy, v. 14; and if the sisters follow that counsel, they will be very likely to escape the errors mentioned in the 13th verse of the same chapter.

Ephes. v.22-29; Titus ii.2-6; and 1 Peter iii.1-7; and a score of other similar passages, contain much good instruction on the subject before us; and while the brethren are watching the sisters very closely to see that they do not get out of order, we hope they will notice some of the gentle admonitions to themselves in the quotations referred to, and see that they shew the sisters that respect which is their due, and not lay upon them any heavier burdens than they are able to bear, or the Lord requires. 1 Cor. xiv.34, is explained by 1 Tim. ii.11 and 12; so that while it is not the privilege of the sisters to teach the brethren, or usurp authority over them, and especially

over the priesthood; or govern the church of Christ; or dictate her discipline; or control the Elders and Officers in any manner: it is their privilege and duty to warn all, both men and women, of what God is doing in these last days, so far as they have opportunity,--and invite all to come and submit themselves to the gospel of Christ.

It is a very different thing to warn the world, professors or non-professors, to repent, and invite them to the ordinances of God's house, from what it is to teach the Church, (or those who have obeyed the gospel,) and to usurp authority over those to whom they should be in subjection.

Women may pray, testify, speak in tongues, and prophesy in the Church, when liberty is given by the Elders, but *not* for the *instruction* of the Elders in their duties. The spirit of the prophets must be subject unto the prophets. Women may vote in the Church, and yet keep silence.--It is their privilege to make and mend, and wash, and cook for the Saints; and lodge strangers; and wash the Saints' feet; and this is surely a most acceptable treat to the servants of God when they are weary, and their feet are sore with long travels: and we rejoice that the sisters esteem it a privilege thus to minister to our necessities; and it is their privilege, in all such things to labour with us in the gospel, like the holy women in the days of Paul; and inasmuch as they do these things, and live by every word of the Lord, they shall in no wise lose their reward.

~~~~~

Source: Pratt, Parley P., ed. *The Millennial Star*, Vol. 1, No. 4, August 1840, pp. 100-101. Liverpool: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day.