

## Women as ministerial overseers of the church?

In His Image Ministries: Adam Mills

It is claimed that in the gospel dispensation there is to be no distinction regarding the roles of men and women in church administration, and that there is to be *only* mutual submission. This claim is based on a less than comprehensive reading of the following text:

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. Galatians 3:28

Was this the intended meaning of Paul? Did Paul believe and teach that all role distinctions were abolished by the sacrifice of Christ, and ratification of the New Covenant? Let us compare what Paul teaches in other areas of his writings on the subject:

1 Corinthians 11:3

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.

Every man is not the head of Christ, the woman is not the head of the man, Christ is not the head of God.

11:7

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.

The man is not the glory of the woman.

11:8

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

Man did not come from woman.

11:9

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

Man was not created as an help for the woman.

It is claimed by many within the Christian church that the headship of males over females spoken of in Scripture is limited to the marriage relationship and therefore should not be applied to the roles of church leadership with regards to any gender distinctions. Thus, when reading such passages as 1 Corinthians 11:3-15, it is suggested that the usages of the words 'man' and 'woman' should be translated as 'husband' and 'wife'. Indeed, some modern Bible translations have actually utilized these very words instead of 'man' and 'woman'. IS THE CONTEXT CONFINED TO MARRIAGE? LET'S SEE...

11:3~ But I would have you know, that the head of EVERY MAN is Christ; [ IS CHRIST THE HEAD OF MARRIED MEN ALONE? THE GREEK WORD, 'ANER' IS THE WORD FOR 'MALE' ] and the head of THE WOMAN [ THE GREEK FORM OF THE WORD 'WOMAN' USED HERE IS THE PLURAL FORM OF 'GUNE' - 'WOMEN' ] [is] THE MAN; and the head of Christ [is] God.

11:4~ EVERY MAN praying or prophesying, having [his] head covered, dishonoureth his head. [ WAS

PAUL ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT MARRIED MEN PRAYING OR PROPHECYING WITH UNCOVERED HEADS? ]

11:5~ 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. [ WAS PAUL ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT MARRIED WOMEN PRAYING OR PROPHECYING WITH COVERED HEADS?]

11:6~ 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. [ WOULD IT BE SHAMEFUL ONLY FOR MARRIED WOMEN TO BE SHAVEN OR SHORN?]

11:7~ For A MAN indeed ought not to cover [his] head, forasmuch as he IS THE IMAGE AND GLORY OF GOD [ ALL MEMBERS OF THE GODHEAD ARE MALE ]: but THE WOMAN IS THE GLORY OF THE MAN [ ARE MARRIED WOMEN ALONE THE GLORY OF THE MAN? ].

11:8~ For THE MAN IS NOT OF THE WOMAN; but the woman of the man. [ WHEN GOD CREATED EVE, WAS SHE ALONE TO BE CONSIDERED 'OF THE MAN', OR WERE MARRIED WOMEN ALONE TO BE CONSIDERED AS SUCH? ]

11:9~ Neither was THE MAN created for THE WOMAN; but THE WOMAN FOR THE MAN. [ WHEN GOD CREATED EVE, WAS SHE ALONE CREATED 'FOR THE MAN'? ]

11:10~ FOR THIS CAUSE ought the woman to have power [GREEK: 'EXOUSIA' - AUTHORITY ] on [her] head BECAUSE OF THE ANGELS. [ ANGELS ALWAYS APPEAR IN SCRIPTURE AS MALE IN GENDER. WOULD THE ANGELS ONLY BE CONCERNED WITH MARRIED WOMEN PRAYING OR PROPHECYING IN THE CHURCH WITH UNCOVERED HEADS?]

11:11~ Nevertheless neither is THE MAN WITHOUT THE WOMAN, neither THE WOMAN without THE MAN, IN THE LORD. [ ARE MARRIED PERSONS ALONE INTERDEPENDENT LY ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE OF THE OPPOSITE SEX IN THE LORD? ]

11:12~ For as THE WOMAN [is] of THE MAN, even so [is] THE MAN also by THE WOMAN; [ ARE MARRIED MEN ALONE BORN OF WOMEN? ] but all things of God.

11:13~ Judge in yourselves: is it comely that A WOMAN pray unto God uncovered?

11:14~ Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if A MAN have long hair, it is a shame unto him? [ IS IT A SHAME FOR MARRIED MEN ALONE TO HAVE LONG HAIR? ]

11:15~ But if A WOMAN have long hair, it is a glory to her: for [her] hair is given her for a covering. [ IS LONG HAIR A GLORY TO MARRIED WOMEN ALONE? ]

It is quite evident that the entire context will not permit the application of 'husband' and 'wife' to the word usages of 'man' and 'woman', confining the subject matter of these verses to marriage ( in spite of the fact that the Greek words can be translated as such depending on the CONTEXT ).

Perhaps the clearest text in scripture on the subject is even CLEARER when read in it's literal form:

1 Timothy 2:12: [Greek] "a woman but to teach not I allow nor TO EXERCISE AUTHORITY OF (or) OVER A MAN but to be in silence." KJV

It is unmistakably clear that there is such a thing as authority divinely reserved for the male. The naysayers may try to challenge God's word by consigning it to mere human culture or by using less clear texts to destroy the clear, but in the end it is God's word still.

Let us now compare what we have looked at thus far with the next text which may be more obscure in meaning, nevertheless, speaks directly to the issue at hand. When utilizing this important rule of Biblical interpretation (comparing texts with other texts of the same topic to arrive at a consistent and complete understanding of the will of God), that which would otherwise seem difficult to comprehend, usually becomes much clearer.

“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? 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.” 1 Corinthians 14:34-38

“Let your women keep silence in the churches” ~ “Let the woman learn in silence”

“for it is not permitted unto them to speak” ~ “But I suffer not a woman to teach”

[Speak = Teach/ Teach = Speak: John 18:20; Acts 4:18; 1 Corinthians 14:19]

“to be *under obedience*” ~ “in silence *with all subjection.*”, “*nor to usurp authority over the man*”

“as also saith the law” ~ “thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” Gen. 3:16

“the head of the woman [is] the man” 1 Corinthians 11:3

“if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home” ~ “Let the woman learn in silence  
with all subjection.”

“for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” ~ “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp  
authority over 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.” 1 Corinthians 11:8,9

[“Speak in the church” = Teach as overseer/bishop/elder/pastor-teacher: John 3:2 [Rabbi = Teacher];  
Ephesians 4:11; Acts 20:17,28; 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:2,24; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:1-4.

It is evident that Paul's seeming prohibition of women speaking or teaching at all in church could not possibly be interpreted as absolute, given his addressing of the matter of the appropriate manner in which women were to *prophesy* in church (1 Corinthians 11:2-16), which is impossible to do in silence, and which also entails the imparting of divine instruction (1 Corinthians 14:3,4).]

Note also the following comparison:

“For the man is not of the woman; but the ~ “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” 1 Tim. 2:13  
woman of the man. Neither was the man  
created for the woman; but the woman  
for the man.” 1 Corinthians 11:8,9

It is important to note that Paul bases his stance regarding the role of women in the church on the very *order* of creation, and the *purpose*, and *function* of the woman in relation to the man. Therefore, any attempts to eliminate, or ignore the distinctions God Himself has ordained in the roles of men and women in, either home or church, is essentially a revolt against *divine order*. This is further evident when noting that Paul directs the church to judge the fitness of a man to assume the role of bishop, by observing his manner of leadership in the home:

“One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)” 1 Timothy 3:4,5

If God intended the *roles* of men and women to be interchangeable in the church, it would also follow that they would be interchangeable in the home, and we would expect to find divine provisions for the woman to be the head of the man in the home. The two realms of life - home and church - are inseparable, inasmuch as the home is a microcosm of the church.

Paul secondarily bases his stance on the fact that the woman was deceived, while the man was not, and under this deception she played a leading role in transgression:

“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” 1 Timothy 2:14

Because Eve was the mother of all living, she would, by the law of heredity, transmit her peculiar characteristics to her posterity. With this in view, the Creator has ordained the subjection of the woman to the man as an integral part of the redemptive plan for the woman. A refusal to submit to this plan is a refusal to submit to the Author of the plan.

To be sure, there is no place for arbitrary, authoritarian rule in either home or church, as both sexes are to acknowledge the Creator as the highest authority in either sphere, and none are to surrender their individuality to another. Nevertheless, we must trust our loving Lord that true success can only be experienced when we are in complete harmony with His infinitely wise counsels.

#### THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY SPEAKS:

“And the Lord said, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." In the creation God had made her the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God--in harmony with His great law of love--they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles joined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, would have proved a blessing to them; but man's abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter and made her life a burden.

Eve had been perfectly happy by her husband's side in her Eden home; but, like restless modern Eves, she was flattered with the hope of entering a higher sphere than that which God had assigned her. In attempting to rise above her original position, she fell far below it. A similar result will be reached by all who are unwilling to take up cheerfully their life duties in accordance with God's plan. In their efforts to reach positions for which He has not fitted them, many are leaving vacant the place where they might be a blessing. In their desire for a higher sphere, many have sacrificed true womanly dignity and nobility of character, and have left undone the very work that Heaven appointed them.” PP 58,59

“The family of the one suggested for office should be considered. Are they in subjection? Can the man rule his own house with honor? What character have his children? Will they do honor to the father's influence? If he has no tact, wisdom, or power of godliness at home in managing his own family, it is safe to conclude that the same defects will be carried into the church, and the same unsanctified management will be seen there.” 5T 618

“The father is the priest of the family. The souls of his wife and children, as God's property, should be to him of the highest value, and he should faithfully guide the formation of their characters. The care of his children from their infancy should be his first consideration; for it is for their present and eternal good that they develop right characters. He should carefully weigh his words and actions, considering their influence, and the results they may produce.

He who is engaged in the work of the gospel ministry must be faithful in his family life. It is as essential that as a father he should improve the talents God has given him for the purpose of making the home a symbol of the heavenly family, as that in the work of the ministry, he should make use of his God given powers to win souls for the church. As the priest in the home, and as the ambassador of Christ in the church, he should exemplify in his life the character of Christ. He must be faithful in watching for souls as one that must give an account. In his service there must be seen no carelessness and inattentive work. God will not serve with the sins of men who have not a clear sense of the sacred responsibility involved in accepting a position as pastor of a church. He who fails to be a faithful, discerning shepherd in the home, will surely fail of being a faithful shepherd of the flock of God in the church.” 6MR 49,50

"The husband is the head of the family, as Christ is the head of the church; and any course which the wife may pursue to lessen his influence and lead him to come down from that dignified, responsible position is displeasing to God. It is the DUTY of the wife to yield her wishes and will to her husband. BOTH SHOULD BE YIELDING, BUT the Word of God gives PREFERENCE TO THE JUDGMENT OF THE HUSBAND. And it will not detract from the dignity of the wife to yield to him whom she has chosen to be her counselor, adviser, and protector. The husband should MAINTAIN HIS POSITION in his family with all MEEKNESS, YET WITH DECISION."--1T 307, 308

"We women must remember that GOD HAS PLACED US SUBJECT to the husband. He is the head, and our judgment and views and reasonings must agree with his, if possible. If not, the PREFERENCE in God's Word is given to THE HUSBAND where it is not a matter of conscience. WE MUST YIELD TO THE HEAD."--Letter 5, 1861. {TSB 28.2}

"ELDERS, local and traveling, are APPOINTED by the church and by the Lord to OVERSEE THE CHURCH, to reprove, exhort, and rebuke the unruly and to comfort the feebleminded. There is no higher tribunal upon earth than the church of God....

I was referred to Hebrews 13:17: "OBEY THEM that have the RULE OVER YOU, and SUBMIT yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13: "And we beseech you, brethren, to KNOW THEM WHICH LABOR among you, and ARE OVER YOU IN THE LORD, and admonish you; and to ESTEEM THEM VERY HIGHLY in love for their work's sake."...GOD HAS BESTOWED POWER ON the church and THE MINISTERS of the church, and it is not a light matter TO RESIST THE AUTHORITY and despise the judgment OF GOD'S MINISTERS." 5MR 296

Clearly, ALL of Christ's followers, both ministers and church members, are to possess submissiveness of spirit, just as in the home, YET God has bestowed an extra level of AUTHORITY upon His MINISTERS to whom the members in general are to SUBMIT. There is no such thing as total equality OF ROLES in the church or home.

"The primary object of our college was to afford young MEN an opportunity to study for THE MINISTRY and to prepare young persons of BOTH SEXES to become workers in the VARIOUS BRANCHES of the cause." {5T 60}

"Those who enter the MISSIONARY FIELD should be MEN AND WOMEN who walk and talk with God. Those who stand as MINISTERS IN THE SACRED DESK should be MEN of blameless reputation." {5T 598}

Ellen White SPOKE with authority as do ALL prophets and prophetess', but she did not *exercise authority* to IMPLEMENT those divine instructions in the church. A prophet does not retain such authority. This has been reserved for the OVERSEERS. A prophet only delivers authoritative messages from God to the church, and the church leadership then have the AUTHORITY to determine what course the church will take in regard to those messages. The ONLY exceptions to this in scripture are those who held offices BEYOND that of prophet simultaneously. Ellen White SUBMITTED to the church leadership when consenting to go to Australia at their direction.

"Those who feel called out to join the movement in favor of woman's rights and the so-called dress reform might as well sever all connection with the third angel's message. THE SPIRIT WHICH ATTENDS the one CANNOT be in harmony with the other. THE SCRIPTURES ARE PLAIN upon the relations and rights of men and women." 1T 421

What we have been deliberating upon is whether in either the marriage or church, all have EQUAL AUTHORITY. The statements provided are unmistakably clear that the answer is NO. In both settings the word 'rule' is employed:

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, and he shall RULE over thee. Gen. 3:16

Obey them that have the RULE over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you. Heb. 13:17

[To be] discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, OBEDIENT to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Titus 1:5

Let the ELDERS that RULE well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 1 Timothy 5:17

If all have equal authority and Christ is the ONLY Leader in either case, then there is no foundation for any of the directives for one to submit to or obey the other, or one to have PREFERENCE over another. There's just no getting around this fact. We would otherwise ONLY be reading about everyone submitting to everyone else and Christ. This is a completely unbiblical agenda. Additionally, there is nothing to be found in the writings of inspiration supporting the idea that these distinctions become obsolete any time this side of eternity.

## ON DULY CONSTITUTED CHURCH AUTHORITY AND UNITY

“I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any other one man. Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work and to say what plans shall be followed. But when, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all parts of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered. Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body.

At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God's work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these few men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority. The error that some are in danger of committing is in giving to the mind and judgment of one man, or of a small group of men, the full measure of authority and influence that God has vested in His church in the judgment and voice of the General Conference assembled to plan for the prosperity and advancement of His work.

When this power, which God has placed in the church, is accredited wholly to one man, and he is invested with the authority to be judgment for other minds, then the true Bible order is changed. Satan's efforts upon such a man's mind would be most subtle and sometimes well-nigh overpowering, for the enemy would hope that through his mind he could affect many others. Let us give to the highest organized authority in the church that which we are prone to give to one man or to a small group of men." 9T 260,261

"Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and perfect discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality, that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course, and to remain especially distinct from bodies of Christians who are united and are laboring to establish discipline and harmony of action. All the efforts made to establish order are considered dangerous, a restriction of rightful liberty, and hence are feared as popery. These devoted souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man's say-so. They are amenable to no man. I was shown that it is Satan's special work to lead men to feel that it is God's order for them to strike out for themselves and choose their own course independent of their brethren.

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinion of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren?

Though we have an individual work and an individual responsibility before God, we are not to follow our own independent judgment, regardless of the opinions and feelings of our brethren; for this course would lead to disorder in the church. It is the duty of ministers to respect the judgment of their brethren; but their relations to one another, as well as the doctrines they teach, should be brought to the test of the law and the testimony; then, if hearts are teachable, there will be no divisions among us. Some are inclined to be disorderly, and are drifting away from the great landmarks of the faith; but God is moving upon His ministers to be one in doctrine and in spirit.

It is necessary that our unity today be of a character that will bear the test of trial. . . . We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be

disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed.

When a brother receives new light upon the Scriptures, he should frankly explain his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with the spirit of candor to see if the points presented can be substantiated by the Inspired Word. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." 2 Timothy 2:24, 25." TM 29 -30

"When you saw that your brethren and sisters were grieved with your course, then it was time for you to stop and consider what you were doing, to pray much, and to counsel with men of experience in the church and gratefully accept their advice.

"But," say you, "should I follow the judgment of the brethren independent of my own feelings?" I answer: The church is God's delegated authority upon earth. Christ has said: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." There is altogether too little respect paid to the opinion of members of the same church. It is the want of deference for the opinions of the church that causes so much trouble among brethren. The eyes of the church may be able to discern in its individual members that which the erring may not see. A few persons may be as blind as the one in error, but the majority of the church is a power which should control its individual members.

The apostle Peter says: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Paul exhorts: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another," "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Unless the advice and counsel of the church can be respected, it is indeed powerless. God has placed a voice in the church which must control its members." 5T 107,108

"God has invested His church with special authority and power which no one can be justified in disregarding and despising, for in so doing he despises the voice of God." 3T 417

"When the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered" Testimonies for the Church Vol. 3, p. 492

#### SDA PIONEERS SPEAK TO THE ISSUE:

D.T. Bourdeau in 1862

"These remarks of the apostle are a standing rebuke against those unquiet and self-sufficient women who are unwilling to submit to their husbands in the Lord, and have a disposition to take the lead in meetings, in the presence of brethren who are qualified to rule the church. It is a shame for women to thus lead out... WE DO NOT LEARN FROM THE SCRIPTURES THAT WOMEN WERE EVER ORDAINED APOSTLES, EVANGELISTS, OR ELDERS; NEITHER DO WE BELIEVE THAT THEY SHOULD TEACH AS SUCH. Yet they may act an important part in speaking the truth to others. (D.T. Bourdeau, Review and Herald Dec 2, 1862 pg 6)

Uriah Smith in 1866



"THE SCRIPTURES REPRESENT, THAT A SUBORDINATE POSITION, IN A CERTAIN SENSE, IS ASSIGNED TO THE WOMAN, FOR THE REASONS THAT SHE WAS FORMED FROM THE MAN, AND AT A SUBSEQUENT TIME, AND WAS FIRST IN TRANSGRESSION. 1 Cor. xi, 8; 1 Tim. ii, 13, 14. THE LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY IS VESTED IN THE MAN. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Gen. iii, 16. THIS ORDER IS NOT TO BE REVERSED, and the woman take the position which has been assigned to the man; and every action on her part which shows that she is usurping this authority, is disorderly, and not to be allowed. Hence Paul says plainly to Timothy, 1 Tim. ii, 12, "But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." There is no doubt but it was the very same point, the usurping of authority over the man, that the same apostle had in view in 1 Cor. xiv, 34. (Review and Herald June 26, 1866 pg 28)

J.H. Waggoner in 1878:

"THE DIVINE ARRANGEMENT, EVEN FROM THE BEGINNING, IS THIS THAT THE MAN IS THE HEAD OF THE WOMAN. EVERY RELATION IS DISREGARD OR ABUSED IN THIS LAWLESS AGE. BUT THE SCRIPTURES ALWAYS MAINTAIN THIS ORDER IN THE FAMILY RELATION. ' For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church ' (Ephesians 5:23). Man is entitled to certain privileges which are not given to woman; and he is subjected to some duties and burdens from which the woman is exempt. A woman may pray, prophesy, exhort, and comfort the church, BUT SHE CANNOT OCCUPY THE POSITION OF A PASTOR OR A RULING ELDER. This would be looked upon as usurping authority over the man, which is here [1 Timothy 2:12] prohibited". [Signs of the Times Dec 19, 1878]

W.H. Littlejohn in 1883 (writing for "The S.D.A. Church Manual)

"While the existence of deaconesses in the early church cannot be proved as satisfactorily as that of elders and deacons, it is, to say the least, highly probable that there was such a class of women in the apostolic days. It has been the custom therefore of some of our churches to elect one or more women to fill a position similar to that which it is supposed that Phebe and others occupied in her day. IT HAS NOT HOWEVER, BEEN THE CUSTOM TO ORDAIN SUCH WOMEN. THE DUTIES of these women are not, therefore, such that it would be proper for them to assist in the communion service. They should ever hold themselves in readiness to render such aid to the elders and deacons in matters of church trial where members of their own sex are involved, as might be thought advisable. They should visit the sick, and the poor, and interest themselves generally in works of charity. In fine, they should act the part of mothers in Israel, lending a helping hand to all who need their assistance, and striving in every way to promote the peace and prosperity of the church. (Review and Herald July 3rd, 1883 "The Church Manual")

M.C. Wilcox in 1895

"Should women be elected to offices in the church when there are enough brethren? IF BY THIS IS MEANT THE OFFICE OF ELDER, WE SHOULD SAY AT ONCE, NO. But there are offices in the church which women can fill acceptably, and oftentimes there are found sisters in the church who are better qualified for this than brethren, such offices, for instance as church clerk, treasurer, librarian of the tract society, etc., as well as the office of deaconess, assisting the deacons in looking after the poor, and in doing such other duties as would naturally fall to their lot. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHURCH ELDER ARE SET FORTH IN 1 TIM. 4:1-7 AND IN TITUS 1:7-9. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT IS IN GOD'S PLAN TO GIVE TO WOMEN THE ORDAINED OFFICES OF THE CHURCH. By this we do not mean to depreciate their labors, service, or devotion.

The sphere of woman is equal to that of man. She was made a help meet, or fit, for man, but that does not mean that her sphere is identical to that of man's. **THE INTERESTS OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD GENERALLY WOULD BE BETTER SERVED IF THE DISTINCTIONS IN GOD'S WORD WERE REGARDED.**" (The Signs of the Times, January 24, 1895, Vol. 21. No. 4, Pg.3)

On judgment day this will be the only concern of the Master:

**"Has the Bible rule been FOLLOWED TO THE LETTER? Read before the church THE RULES GIVEN them by their Captain, and let the question be asked, HAVE THEY OBEYED ORDERS like faithful soldiers in the army? To go contrary to the positive orders of the Captain of our salvation is DESERVING OF SEVEREST CENSURE by those whom God has placed in authority. . . ."**{15MR 136.1}