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THE SCRIPTURAL STATUS OF WOMAN.

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At the recent Thanksgiving, I took occasion to assert, in my pulpit, to the effect "that both our religion and the Declaration of Independence justify woman in the assumption of equal rights and immunities with man." For this, not only the offender, but also the Bible, the Christian Church, and notably St. Paul, were subjected to a terrible castigation by a correspondent of the local city press. In view of said criticism, this paper was prepared.

I did not teach that the authorities referred to warrant any claim to perfect human equality. Equality of individuals is an Utopian ideal. Inherited derangements, accidents, and abilities and disabilities, together with endless temporal environments, have, and ever will interpose unsurmountable barriers to absolute human equality. The Scriptures constantly recognize these differences. The accident of sex is one of many characteristics of earth-life, carrying with it certain advantages and disadvantages. The question is not the ratio of advantage or disadvantage, but the inherent status of each and every individual; the God-given rights and immunities in life.

The Scriptures class male and female under the generic race-term "*man*." Gen. i. 27. "So God created *man* in His own image—male and female created He *them*." Moses confirms this by putting into Adam's speech the same word when speaking of woman, which he employs to designate man, only adding the feminine termination.

Again, both property-right and government were given to and invested in man and woman plurally. Gen. i. 26. "Let *them* have dominion over," &c., and at verse 29, "Behold, I have given *you* every," &c. Thus, the God-given rights and immunities of world-life were bestowed jointly and equally

to male and female. Let the Church and State write the race-term *man* and interpret as the Bible does, that it embraces male and female, and that all interests and dominion are subject to be lodged jointly in *them*, or specifically in the individual, without invidious respect of persons and there will remain no ground of complaint against either the ecclesiastical or the civil laws,

But I would not overlook the change effected in woman's relation on account of her leading off into transgression of the Divine commandment. Because of this, God Himself said (Gen. iii. 16) : "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow. * * Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall *rule* over thee." The apostle also alludes to this fact as entailing disparagement of woman. But since Jesus, the seed of the woman, and the world's restorer, has come, who shall deny that this lost estate of woman's heritage has been restored?

When certain Sadducees, with their narrow tenets of of woman as a subjective creature, came to Jesus and propounded a question relating to the distribution in the future life of a numerously married woman, the Master replied substantially, "Ye do err, because ye do not comprehend the Scriptures nor the power of God. The relations of sex do not obtain beyond this life; but those who attain the resurrection from the dead are the children of God, and are equal to the angels." Thus, not only disability entailed upon the race through transgression is wholly removed, but also the sex characteristic, which is judged to attach inferiority, subjective relation and essential disability, is shown by the Saviour to be but temporary and in no sense a permanent or essentially disparaging feature of existence. Then why should the Church and State discriminate about the ephemeral accident of sex in human existence in anywise differently from those features of being constituting the temperaments of the individual or the avoirdupois of the body? The Saviour's teaching respects, determines and fixes the law of human equality.

Fitness or adaptation, not arbitrary selection of class, is the scriptural basis of usefulness and honor. But we, in our formulated laws and cherished public sentiment, imitate the feudal lords of the old world and the slave-masters of all times. Since we have grandly outgrown that selfish barbarism which enslaved or doomed to serfdom genera-

tions of the human race on assumption of hereditary superiority, so we ought to cast off this relic of superstition and heathenism which relegates and limits to specific and inferior duties the whole race of womankind. For such relegation of woman as a class, is more cruel and unreasonable than that system which remanded whole generations of mankind to hewing wood and stone and irrigating lands; since the latter was based on mental or moral weakness and obliquity, but woman is debarred where her talents, affections and impulses warrant great acceptability and unbounded usefulness.

With our practice, how are we to reconcile the scientific discovery that the God of nature furnishes neither attribute, property nor quality, except for valuable employment or use? Or how shall we answer to that moral responsibility which, with inexorable justice, requires of every one an improvement of talents bestowed? Enforced unimprovement and non-use may not be visited with retribution upon the idling individual, but what apology shall be made for those who, by ecclesiastical or legislative enactments and proscriptions, prevent the improvement and utilizing of valuable talents? Who shall garnish the immortal brows of angel spirits, formerly women of earth, and, but for the barriers interposed by the Church should have turned many to righteousness, and hence been entitled to shine as the stars forever and ever? Who shall appease the agony of the unsaved, who, had not woman been hindered in the disposition to labor when the spirit was poured out upon handmaidens, should now stand arrayed as the sons of the morning? What but the lack of woman, an unfettered and welcome helper, hinders the universal empire of the Gospel? Let the churches of earth exalt woman to her scriptural status, and you have almost answered the question, "How shall the masses be reached?" Only as man and woman come jointly to the warfare against sin, is there decisive victory and promise of absolute conquest.

If woman is to stand so necessary and pronounced a factor in the Church of the redemption, it is reasonable to suppose that outcroppings of such promise and of latent possibilities would be found in the Jewish and Church histories, and hints and prophecies of woman's glory occasionally appear in the Scriptures. Such assumption and search shall not be disappointed. The Scriptures furnish numerous examples of their doctrine and law concerning woman. By consulting

Numbers, 27th chapter, we find that inheritance among the Hebrews, robbed by death of legal male heirs, was, by command of the Lord, transmitted, with whatever rights and immunities this embraced, to the daughters. With us the daughters succeed to real and personal effects; but by both church and civil law they are deprived of representative status among their brethren. This was the very question settled by Almighty God in the combined Church and State in the Wilderness. The right of the family to exist as a representative part of the Church and State, under the covenant of redemption, being settled, they naturally (Josh. xvii. 3) succeeded to their share in the distribution of the lands taken from the heathen, not because their father had purchased or helped to acquire by conquest such right, but solely and singly because of their inherent rights as a constituent family of one of the twelve tribes. We dwell on this because here was Jehovah's settlement of a disputed point, and the very point we have under review. Coming out from Egypt, these Hebrews could hardly have possessed exalted ideas of woman. So, when all the males were dead in the family of Zelophehad, they naturally were disposed to do as they had known in Egypt, and as we do to this day, both in Church and State—blot out the official status of that family. But the noble girls protested, and sued for the perpetuation of the official status of the family, not for the old clothes of their father, nor for the homer in which manna was measured for the household; but for their name and representation among the families of Israel. Moses confessed the matter too high for him. So the appeal was carried to Jehovah, and God settled the question. A family does not die with its male members. Females are as truly parts of the family as males, and entitled to the same recognition by the Church and State.

In the 15th chapter of Exodus, verse 20, Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses, is spoken of as a prophetess, and she and her Hebrew sisters officiate in public worship with instrument and voice. The chorus which they sung, and which was doubtless Miriam's production, would command talent in either male or female of our day.

By reference to the first and second chapters of 1 Samuel, you will find an example of a woman, Mrs. Hannah Elkanah, offering prayer in the public place of worship. That prayer

was earnest, yet silent, and was heard. Days afterwards, the same woman offered a noble tribute of thanksgiving and prayer in the house of the Lord at Shiloh. This latter worship was so favorably accepted, that God not only permitted a few attending priests and people to hear a woman praying, but caused that prayer to be formally recorded in His Holy Book, thereby sending woman's voice in public prayer adown the aisles of time to the eternities.

On the question of professions, we read in Exodus i. 15. of two female physicians, one Dr. Shiprah, and the other Dr. Puah. These lady physicians were sufficiently prominent to receive the recognition of the King of Egypt, notwithstanding they were of the despised and enslaved Hebrew race.

The rights and immunities of official position, as prophetess, and what would seem to have been as professor in a college or theological seminary at Jerusalem, were held and exercised by a Mrs. Huldah Shallum, at whose feet and from whose lips scribe, priest and king received teaching and commandment and prophecy, the woman interpreting to and enjoining upon these men the commandment of the Book of God, as his spirit assisted and enlightened her to do. 2 Kings, xxii.

Again, there was Mrs. Deborah Lapidoth, a married lady and prophetess, who judged Israel. The position of this lady appears to have been much the same as that of President of the United States, with the additional features of the judicial and religious offices superadded. Hence this lady was President, Supreme Judge and Prophetess of the Theocratic Republic of Israel. How a woman came to the exalted headship of Jehovah's people, is not distinctly mentioned; but it is elsewhere stated that the Lord raised up the judges of his people. Of the resolution and character of her administration, it is recorded that, when General Barak, who had charge of the nation's army, hesitated and refused to undertake what she regarded a necessary but perilous campaign, she assumed, at the general's suggestion, her legal position as commander-in-chief of the moving army, personally superintended the attack, and carried victory against the enemies of her nation and people. By reading the 4th chapter of Judges you will surmise that woman in office was fully vindicated. Moreover, this lady, after the victory, joined Barak in open public worship in honor of the victory God had given

them. The significance of her war and home policy is tersely affirmed in the brief note at the close of the 5th chapter of Judges: "And the land had rest forty years."

Such are a few of the outcroppings of history, along the stream of Bible literature. But I will not trespass upon the reader's patience by writing particularly of the prophetess mentioned by Isaiah as the mother of an infant; nor of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, whose services were accepted and noted in the midst of family responsibilities; nor of the aged lady Anna, whose home was in the Holy Temple, and who prophesied so touchingly while holding the infant Jesus in her arms; of the Misses Phillips, Acts xxi. 9; of Aquila, who, with her husband, acted as instructor to the eloquent Apollos; of Priscilla, Paul's "helper in Christ Jesus," of the church at Rome; of "Phœbe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea," whom Paul exhorts the church at Rome to cordially receive and assist in her godly work as she may require; of "Junia, a kinswoman and fellow-prisoner with Paul, and of note among the apostles;" of those women whom Paul acknowledges to have labored with him in the Gospel at Philippi, and of many other women, whose names or deeds are mentioned honorably as among the workers of the apostolic churches.

We may diverge here to assert that in perfect accord with the scriptural doctrine and ancient biblical and early apostolic practice, we read the document of American Independence. I can hardly conceive how such perfect analogy and accord should have obtained at these widely diverse fountains of civilization, each originating in and being succeeded by times of terrible perverseness on the subject of woman's status, except in the faith of a Divine leading and providence.

While conceding that absolute human equality cannot be attained, and even if attained, could not be maintained, we nevertheless demand the formulation of the equality principle into both ecclesiastical and civil law. Let such laws be modified until inherent human rights shall not be intercepted—until rights of whatsoever kind that may contribute to the advantage of the individual, socially, governmentally, educationally, or professionally, shall be formally by statute assured, without respect of persons, to white and colored, male and female. Such is the attitude of Scripture both in

doctrine and practice. Such is the spirit of our Declaration of Independence. That this, in a republic, carries the question of general suffrage, may be open to debate. But that woman, as woman, can be justly barred the right, privilege, duty, advantage or whatsoever it may be determined, of representation, casting her vote, or holding office, I emphatically deny. The word of the living God has fixed all this.

At this point, I am reminded of St. Paul's attitude on this question. My critic writes: "He (Paul) did not accord to woman the right to teach or preach religion publicly." I might answer, woman enjoyed such right long before Paul was born, and exercised it at the same time and in the same church with that apostle; hence such interpretation of Paul is manifestly erroneous.

Further, notwithstanding the terrible degradation of woman in every nation of the earth, the Jewish scarcely deserving to be excepted, when the kingdom of God came to marshal for aggressive work, male and female sat in the same congregation and received the same anointing, the Spirit making no difference, but bestowing like gift unto the women as unto the men. This unusual recognition of woman and her strange experience seem to have called for immediate defense. Hence, Peter, in the same breath with which he accounted for the remarkable conduct of his companions, proved from the scriptures, that woman equally with man, shared in the grace and gifts of the new dispensation. This status of woman in the Gospel Church he showed to have been prophesied eight hundred years previous. Thus Jesus, by his spirit, reveals and fixes the true spirit of the kingdom of heaven—the Gospel Church. Now, woman, who through the long and tedious centuries, had realized the curse for her prominence in the sinning of Eden, is formally declared emancipated; and sitting the equal of her brother in the congregation of the church, rightfully receives with man the divine empowerment under which both sons and daughters shall prophesy, and servants and hand maidens are equally authorized and become competent teachers and preachers of the gospel of grace. So assuredly there must be a wrong interpretation of St Paul. That apostle was called not to subvert the gospel, but to establish; not to formulate a new religion, but to preach the religion gloriously demonstrated at Pentecost. But we have seen that St. Paul in his epistles

acknowledged repeatedly the helpfulness of women workers; and that he also commended women to the churches as helpers.

That the manner and spirit of St. Paul's recognition of woman as a helper may be clearly presented, I quote from Phil iv. 3. "Help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and others my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life." Now no one, unless there is an interpretation to support, would discriminate between the labor of the male and female laborers; certainly St. Paul does not. In fact he affirms that the women worked with him—not as some teach women should do, by themselves. Again, there is one phase of work attributed to Phebe, which our common translation fails to present; and it is on this the Apostle Paul makes his special appeal. See Greek text, Rom. xvi. 1-2. I refer to Phebe's executive work or management—her confessed ability as a projector or superintendent. Phebe is soon to visit Rome. After her arrival, she will personally take a view of affairs, and devise plans, and call on the church collectively or individually, to assist her in carrying out needed measures. St. Paul, after endorsing Phebe, as "our sister and deaconess of the Lord at Cenchrea," charges that she shall be received and assisted as "she shall require." St. Paul seems, however, to anticipate some objection; hence, he adds words which imply, you need not hesitate to accord this "superiority," "for her pre-eminence (*prostatis*, rule, see Rom. xii. 8,) has been exercised over many *others*, and over me also." It cannot be that a man of St. Paul's integrity and fulfilling a ministry and apostleship, abounding in such history of fellowship and containing so much commendation of female helpers in the churches as his epistles show, should have absolutely proscribed women, as a class, from public teaching and service in the church. No! no! The Bible and Christian doctrine and practice are too pronounced to be set aside; and this very apostle's record and spirit are too fully stated in his letters to convict him of opposing woman openly and assiduously working in the church of Christ.

The passage cited at 1 Cor. xiv. 34-35, is a strictly local charge to the particular church at Corinth. The Apostles words limit the application. "Let *your* women" &c. Correct interpretation does not claim a singular charge as formula-

ting a rule or law for the Church of Jesus for all places and all times. My critic who cites this passage to prove his assertion that St. Paul prohibited women teaching in the Church, might with about equal justice quote the charge to Timothy to bring the cloak from Troas, as a general instruction to young ministers to keep a diligent watch for mislaid garments of absent-minded elders. There is not a little of this kind of scripture interpretation indulged. Precisely on this line of interpretation the pro-slavery advocates formerly defended the abomination of buying and selling human beings, quoting from this same Apostle's letter to the Ephesians, vi. 5-9, in proof that the institution had received the divine sanction and substantial formulation of a law for Christianity. Whereas the facts are, St. Paul found the conditions of master and slave and without either approving or quarrelling with what he could not at the time change, he, as any high-minded person, would, gave such charges to both master and slave as were needful under the circumstances for godly living. It was a vague interpretation, that transformed these directions to duty under set circumstances, into formal law of Christianity for all time.

On the particular question of woman's relative status with man in the Church, the Apostle Paul in a previous chapter renders his decision of the law and spirit of Christianity. See 1 Cor. xi chapter. As to that status with man read the third verse. "The head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." But Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," so neither is it robbery for woman to be equal with man. And as Christ, the second in the God-Head, is equal in titles, rank and power, although devoted to special work of redemption; so woman, the second person in generic manhood, is equal with man in all that pertains to human honor, rank and rights, although consigned to the specific mission of motherhood of mankind. And again, as Christ the second in the God-Head fills, as we are assured by the scriptures, all the offices and works of God in grace and nature; so woman, the second in manhood, fills justly all the offices and works pertaining to human duties. Such are logical deductions of the Apostle's classification, and mark you the questions under discussion are woman's status and decorum in the Church of Jesus Christ. The Apostle raises this argument for answering questions which naturally arose

among the heathen converts to Christianity on observing woman admitted to hold offices in the Church and to officiate in services according to ancient Jewish and early Christian usage; and to speak and teach in the public assembly, the latter especially repugnant to the Greek and other Gentile notions. The questions submitted to the Apostle must have been substantially. "*What is woman's status relatively with man in the Christian Church? And if woman may pray and preach in the public assembly, how shall she appear when ministering before the congregation?*"

If St. Paul had held as many divines, interpret, and I might say the Church generally accepts, he would have answered, "Woman can have no official status whatever in the Christian Church, and she must not appear in any guise of public service; except to sing in the public assembly." How different St. Paul's answer. The woman, says he, is relatively to the man as Christ to God—on equality—this is her status. In her adornment there are certain feminine usages—some of which, as long hair appears to be natural—such distinctions let her be careful to maintain when she officiates in the Church. All that quibble about the inferior status of the second person in generic manhood, has long since been brought to bear against the second person of the God-head by Unitarians and fully refuted by the supporters of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Now can any intelligent person suppose that as able and conscientious a writer as St. Paul, would occupy a large paragraph in noting the status and giving technical directions regarding the *personel* of woman while prophesying and praying in the Church, only to make all his careful and painstaking decision as so much useless verbiage, through a subsequent absolute and general prohibition against woman taking any part in the official and public services of the Church. That view might afford an easy interpretation of a difficult scripture: but when an interpretation blots out a large paragraph as that contained in the xi. chapter of 1 Corinthians and thus convicts an inspired writer of useless scribbling or trifling, is it not full time for biblical critics to seek a less destructive understanding of holy truth. Had not the Christian Church suffered blind prejudice to serve her as eyes, such dregs of heathen customs, had not through eighteen centuries weakened Zion and shaped the treatment and employment of

women so erroneously. But a better and more consistent solution of the enigma produced on this question by the Apostles' precepts and practice, shall, ere long, we confidently believe, be accepted by the Protestant Churches.

Here are the historic facts. The Churches of Asia Minor were constituted largely of converts from heathenism. The usages of society among that people, prepared only the male members for speaking in the public assembly; and particularly, so that when necessity arose, every male should be able to plead his own cause on the Bema. Woman received no such training, as she had no privilege at the Bema. This heathen custom of abjuring woman, has ever largely prevailed, even to our day, "though the mists have somewhat cleared." Hence, the male members of society have always been found at great advantage in the congregation, and have monopolized the platform, except where the platform is a minister of the devil. Satan has always found public employment of woman a necessity unto success. St. Paul found the male converts to Christianity competent to stand before a public assembly, and many able to intelligently instruct the people and advance and defend the Christian doctrines. He found the women illiterate, untrained and unused to the license originally granted women in the Jewish religion, and contemplated in the Christian. He found woman as associated with the heathen religion, disreputable and debauched. He found public sentiment stubbornly arrayed against citizen women of pure character appearing in public vocation. Hence, after faithfully declaring the status of woman under Christianity, 1 Cor. xi, and technically giving instruction as to her attire when she should officiate in the Christian services, (which history records she frequently did, by both private teaching and public prayer and prophesying, i. e., preaching) St. Paul, because of the unfitness of those women in Corinth for public labor, and also of those churches established in cities of Asia Minor and Colonies of Rome, and possibly somewhat because of the degraded conditions to which women devoted to the heathen worship were subjected, yielded so far to circumstances and public sentiment, as to put an interdiction against the women at Corinth officiating in the Church. Afterward, he found it necessary to refuse his sanction to all converts from the heathen among the women of the Churches under his supervision. 1 Tim. ii.

So general was the ignorance and unfitness of heathen women, so unstable and gossipy their character, that this modified legislation became expedient, although it revoked in certain places, and as to certain individuals, the general law of Christianity by temporarily suspending for sufficient cause the services of women. Thus St. Paul judged it prudent to do in this matter as on the question of slavery, conform somewhat his apostolic example and precepts to the exigencies of the state of society.

This is delicate ground to tread upon. But when inspiration leads, there needs not a Procrustean bed for every human. Principles are formulated and promulgated; but man is helped until he stands abreast of the divine Commandments. This educative feature of divine legislation has been common in every age. You will find notable examples in what may be called the preceptive legislation of Moses. Of the article on divorces, Jesus says: Moses modified the commandment of God, because of the hardness of the peoples' heart; so St. Paul was constrained to modify the general law of the Bible and Christianity, on the status and rights of women in certain churches, because of the unfitness of the women gathered from heathen society to assume the full measure of responsibility, and because of the licentiousness practised under the forms of religion by its female devotees throughout Asia Minor. Similar limitations of rights for cause are constantly enforced among both males and females. St. Paul's course is a strong argument that Christianity accorded such rights to women as were by him denied in the instances referred to. That was simply a refusal to entrust lawful responsibility, where, owing to conditions of social life, the rightful recipients had been denied the opportunity of such elevation and preparation as other heirs of the same rights had enjoyed. It was no fault of St. Paul nor Christianity, that heathenism had enforced women into an inferiority and degradation which unfitted her to be a prominent factor in Christianizing her people and the race. It would become St. Paul's duty and the duty of Christianity to educate and elevate this neglected, ignorant and debauched class of society; so that instead of garrulous, gossiping busy-bodies and wanton harlots unsuited to officiate or serve important work in a holy Church, they might become fitted and qualified unto responsible work for Christ and humanity. That

St. Paul did not neglect in this matter, there is much reason for believing. That Christianity labored for the elevation of woman, is demonstrated by the fact confirmed by all history, that women very rapidly rose in private and public influence, and honor and virtue wherever Christianity spread and prevailed. May we not infer a singular inspiration for the Scriptures, since, although written in times of great darkness and contempt of women, and by diverse authors, and through many years; neither the Old or the New Testament, anywhere indulges in disparagement of the sex. Indeed, so far removed from joining with the public sentiment of the times of their publication, it is only by wresting some two passages given by St. Paul, under pressure of local expediency, that the Bible is made to seem to approve the public sentiments of this nine-teenth century. And those who hold the Scriptures accountable for the existing public sentiment on the question of woman's status with man, had better look up that sentiment among the people where the Bible is little circulated, and where it does not circulate at all. It is an indisputable fact that where there is most Bible reading, and most reverence for the Holy Scriptures, there woman is most cherished, beloved and honored. Thus, what the apostles of Christianity could not at once effect by any processes of legislation, is being inevitably produced by the essential principles of the religion of Jesus.

The mystery of the incarnation, warrants woman in the status of equality with her male companion. Judged by every thought of analogy, from the day of Jehovah's betrothal of the daughter of Adam, the father could not have redemption above that child; nor should the son of that espousal elevate the distant male relative above the more directly allied female. Wherefore, reverently, let us stand with uncovered and bowed heads, while woman worships on the anniversary day of Jehovah's wonderful condescension, and woman's wonderful exaltation. And as we, of the family of Adam, in the grace of the redemption of the Son of God, who was also the son of woman, move up to our entitled redemption; let us not deny to woman equal status till we stand where all are equal to the angels of God.

God made, as we have seen, sundry indications and promise of this restoration, in the Jewish scriptures. But full proclamation was reserved until the fulfillment of the prom-

ise of the Redeemer. When this wonder was wrought and the opening of the new dispensation on the day of Pentecost was come, the Spirit first made specific example of woman's equality with man in the gifts of his grace. To this baptism of woman with man both the author of the Acts and Peter witness. And that the bestowment of that baptism was regarded by Peter himself as a pledge of equality, read Acts x and xi chapters. Cornelius of the Gentiles was under that election fully admitted to the standing of converted Jews. Hence we accept that "where sin abounded" and wrought for woman most lamentable humiliation and degradation under every form of society and device of religion in the whole earth and in every state of life, "grace has much more abounded" and woman stands under the atonement of Christ the divine Lord, disenthralled the noble equal of man and heir with him to all the rights and immunities of the life that now is and of that which is to come. Slowly, but surely, the old barbarisms break down and disappear, certainly and grandly earth-life is dignified and ennobled and although some weakness and impediment shall stand throughout time, sorrowful reminder of erring ways; yet even woman, despite the annoying thorns incident to the human flesh, may claim "through Christ which strengtheneth me I can do all things."

Woman ought above all flesh to revere the Old Jewish Scriptures and their complement the Christian religion for through these she has attained the exalted status and excellent advantages which she enjoys among the enlightened peoples of the earth. And when the status and rights to which the Old and New Testament show her to be entitled, are formulation in civil and ecclesiastical law, as they will ere long be, woman will have no occasion for just complaint against either Church or State.

I conclude with calling attention to the apostle's collocation of three obstacles standing directly in the pathway of the kingdom of God. Like three great peaks of a prodigious mountain, these rise obscuring the ultimate fulness and glory of Christianity. The inspiration granted St. Paul however, enables him to know that these peaks are but icebergs born of the night of sin and now that the sun of righteousness shines never to set, all shall melt away and thenceforth there shall be "neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female, but all one in Christ Jesus."

1. The first represents the seclusiveness and ostracism of the Jew. To him the Gentile was barely tolerable. Even that good and fully instructed man the apostle James, appears to have transmitted this contempt of Gentiles to his immediate associates or at least failed to correct and establish a better sentiment in those most intimate with himself. See Gal. ii. 12-13. From this passage we learn that Peter and Barnabas and others were awed into dissimulation before that Jewish prejudice which assumed Gentile inferiority. It is not surprising therefore, that ministers of our times hesitate to lead out into reforms. Moreover, scripture, while inviting through its general maxims and spirit to every reform, has on every question to casual students discouraged the advance and seemingly disapproved by historic precept. The case stood precisely thus on the relative status of Jew and Gentile, and before this paradox, Peter, James and others wavered. But Jehovah enlightenes and nerves diligent souls for the occasion. So Paul stood forth with rebuke for cowardice and with affirmation, that there is no inherent difference between Jew and Gentile and that God makes no invidious election. For a moment the new Church is stunned in every member; but gradually the first obstruction sinks away and the kingdom of God soon knows no Jew or Gentile.

2. The second is the distinctions raised by caste and slave systems of the world. The progress of the gospel has been hindered in all lands by trammellings originated in oppression. Assumed superiority and inferiority with manifold entailments, have ever put an embargo upon truth. We know how literally this has been demonstrated in our own land. Those who are conversant with people and customs of other nations represent to what unseemly proportions these features of social and commercial life arise and what obstacles they interpose against the advance and the establishment of Christ's kingdom. The same apostle, who pronounced the abolition of the exclusive Jewish system, venerable and supported by sacred history and tradition as it was, proclaimed the design of the gospel "to break every yoke" of human bondage—not only to mitigate the severity and to modify the dishonor of caste and slavery; but so literally and absolutely abolish all, that henceforth, there shall be in Messiah's kingdom no more "bond or free," but "all one in Christ Jesus."

3. The other of the trio of class obstacles which the corruption of the world developed and vomited out abreast the march of human restoration is the enforced degradation and uselessness of woman as a helper in the final redemption.

Strange as it seems, yet it is true, that woman who was created a help-meet for man, has in every age and land, ministered publicly and prominently, and with approval, in debasement of her race, but has been for long centuries generally debared from active participation and assistance where man is charged with the noblest work entrusted to his hand. And it can hardly be regarded marvellous that the world's salvation drags, and that the universal kingdom of Christ threatens to only meagerly gather the people. But the apathy and indisposition to admit woman to equality of human duties is in keeping with the former history. For did not the Jew sturdily stand for advantage, when he found himself supported in his ostracism of the Gentile by ecclesiastics, who accepted and defended with scarcely an opponent such interpretation of the word of Jehovah? And was not the slavemaster long justified, while enforcing the condition and relation of the slave or serf, by unquestioned authority contained in the divine scriptures? So expositors of confessed ability interpreted and stubbornly defended, citing among other passages St. Paul's disposition of the question in certain churches of Asia Minor as conclusive in their support. And our American Churches frowned down what they contemptuously called "Modern abolitionism." But who that interprets the scriptures now although less than half a century removed, does not see, that for eighteen hundred years the true attitude of Christianity to slavery was rarely realized.

What St. Paul reluctantly tolerated, because of the state of society, and what he must have known, the education, practice and maxims of Christianity would ultimately cast off, was believed to be formulated into a rule of religion by his temporary and local precept; and all this, despite the prophecies and apothems, and doctrines, and spirit of Scripture, which were constantly clamoring for the reform. Shall we wonder on reviewing the past, at what we find set forth as the scriptural view of the question considered in these pages? St. Paul mentions it as the most distant of the triad of named obstacles, blocking the spread of the gospel. Woman's inequality and ineligibility are assumed to be supported by the

Bible, just as gentile exclusion and slavery of mankind. But woman, although physically, not mentally or morally "the weaker vessel," should have "honor, as also being heirs together of the grace of life." (1 Peter, iii. 7.) The ostracism of woman is no more commanded by scripture, than the ostracism of gentiles. Imposed subjection of women is no more commanded, as a general or fundamental doctrine of Scripture, than the enslavement of parts of the human race. The times of ignorance on the two former of these triad of errors, has passed. We are in the throes of transition from the third. Many good men as Peter, and James, and Barnabas and others, in the days of the transition from Judaic narrowness, appear ludicrously. So in the transition from proslavery to anti-slavery times, what awkward, mortifying and strained endeavors were made by talented divines to construe the Holy Scripture, and notably St. Paul, into support of the imperiled institution. Men of broad thought and wide culture, knew that, while as in a great stream, because of small eddies, some straws may be seen floating backwards; yet, the current of Bible truth, more than all other instrumentalities was accumulating a strength of morality and public sentiment, which never would rest until slavery and feudalism by reforms should be swept into one common grave. And whoever reads the signs of the times aright, will not fail to comprehend that the day of woman's activity, and power, and glory are upon us. No agency is so pronounced a factor in this approaching result, as the dear old family Bible. A few who are wedded to the ancient interpretations, may play Peter and rise from their seats and totter for the door as woman steps to the platform, the pulpit and the polls, and a very few unprogressive spirits may, as did the Jews to our Saviour—the precepts of Moses on divorces, repeat St. Paul's restrictions on the heathen-trained women of Asia Minor. But just as sure as the marriage vow may not be set aside by the male party, and as sure as "Jew and Gentile, bond and free," are distinctions without disparagement, and as sure as Jewish prophecy of gifts of the Spirit have been and are fulfilled upon women; so sure the apostolic proclamation of equal status shall be speedily fulfilled, and none demur, that they who have like gifts, shall labor in the Church of the Redemption, not as "male or female, but all one in Christ Jesus."

