

"Woman's Place in Creation"

The Rev. Evan R. Prichard in Puyallup, Washington, in February, 1890

[This is an excerpt. A copy of the complete original text is available in our church office.]

One very remarkable thing in the sublime order of creation is the silence following the creating of man. As if it were an afterthought with God, he proceeded to supply the missing link in the mystic chain of being. Whatever may be the reason it was not out of any disrespect to woman, but on the other hand the delay was for the purpose of conferring a brighter crown upon her than she would otherwise have worn, that woman might grace the achievement, has in it instructive significance. There is a feeling in true manhood that defers to woman.

There was no likeness to himself, no response to the yearnings of the soul within him. If there is to be a man in creation, if he is to fulfill the mission his being indicates, then it is not complete – there is a head, but there was no crown for it – until God made a woman, there was a human heart, but no object full worthy (of) its native affection.

There was nothing that could sufficiently challenge his faculties so as to call out their full scope. Paradise with its bewitching beauty, it (is) a weird wonder, was not sufficient to meet every want God had implemented within that manhood. God lulled Adam to slumber and from part of himself close to his heart formed another whom He brought to him, bearing likeness to himself, (she) by her superior charms met the noblest wants of his being and was worthy to by him (be) named woman. I do not think that there are any grounds to say that woman is a degree below man, if anything it is otherwise. As Matthew Henry quaintly says, "The man was dust refined, but woman was dust doubly refined one remove (further) from the earth." God's best gift, the final and signal impulse.

"The stars at morning in their courses sung; Earth echoed back a shout of grateful love from every valley, cavern, stream, and grove. Man filled with praise, God bowed to view his work and God pronounced it good." The woman, not the man, was the last,

sublimest touch of Jehovah in the achievement of creation. Without woman there could be no basis for the great fabric of society. As an English author has said, "for man to be alone means suicide, for two men to be together means homicide." Woman alone can keep society moving and healthful. And on the other hand woman has no advantage when she has unwisely wanted her independence, for then she has violated the sublimist elements of her being which is unseemly and hurtful.

God announces the fact of the interdependence of the sexes. And, whenever this is disregarded, the social order is disturbed and woman even more than man is the sufferer. But it must be remembered that she is not his duplicate, but his complement, corresponding with himself in all essential particulars. She supplies his defects and balances, the one-sidedness of his nature, a more complete harmony and realizes a more perfect order. So, as Dr. Worcester says, "ideal womanhood is not a pale copy of manhood – it is a new thought of God whose very preciousness lies in its distinctness.

The only true woman's rights agitation is that which seeks to remove from her path whatever in the usages or institutions of society hinders her from seeking the highest development of her womanhood, not that which would clear a path for her to compete for the excellence and achievements of manhood.

How will you measure against each other things so much alike? ...if strength be the standard, man is superior; if grace and beauty, woman. Mentally, if comprehension and logical power be the criterion, generally man is the superior; if alertness and intuitive foresight, then woman. Ruskin sum up the case well when he says, "We are foolish in speaking of the superiority of one sex, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each is what the other is not ... and completes the other." Both are necessary; each serves its particular purpose.

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Now Eden is blighted. Adam and Eve, blushing and weeping, are driven from the abode of innocence. Was she not man's tempter? Can she any longer be the better half of humanity? Wonderful love of God! The "seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head!" That ruin might be recovered and woman shall come to be God's angel. For by her who was Life in the garden of innocence came that One who is now the Light and life of men – at once the Savior. First by creation and second by incarnation God has ennobled woman. In the Garden of Eden God showed us woman; in the incarnation He has shown us womanhood.

That woman in this new era precipitated by a common fall has marvelous advantages over her first erring sister even before she put forth her hand to take the forbidden fruit. Eve began with Adam made in the image of God, but woman now may begin with Christ. She has not only a gracious deliverance from common ruin, but she has a masterly protection from the repetition of such a catastrophe - the glorious destiny marked out now for woman when loyal to herself and to her God in Christ. Yes, Christ comes to put a better and brighter crown upon woman's head than Mother Eve ever wore in the first Paradise, for He has not forgotten the baptism of woman's tears nor the anointing for the burial nor her ministry at the cross and sepulcher. Rather does He expect her to image before a weary, sinning world His own blessed nature and life.

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He was an honorably retired member of Seattle Presbytery. Ordained, October 1882, two year later, he moved to the Presbytery of Oregon; ten years later to Washington. This sermon: Delivered in Albany, Puyallup, Aberdeen, Broadway.

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