

LESSON 53.

MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY FOR WOMEN.

405. We do not say, therefore, that women are not to be humble and meek; they must be, to please God. We have shown, however, that meekness is not weakness, nor humility servility. Both meekness and humility supersede man's government with God's. And woman must do this to enter into the kingdom of God. It is *under God's rule alone* that these virtues grow; outside of God's exclusive government they are not found. Their very source of existence is in entire dependence upon GOD ALONE, and that necessitates entire independence of other control.

406. We owe duties to each other, and women owe certain duties to their husbands; we are perfectly clear on that point. We are not to avenge ourselves, as God's children, when oppressed or defrauded; Christ did not. The wife must be Christ-like when wronged by her husband. God has commanded this non-resistance, and women must practice it, even if some men do but preach it to women for self-interested reasons.

407. But all this is to be done "*as unto the Lord, and not unto men,*" done because God commands it, in spite of the fact that man may command it for selfish reasons. But this class of duties is to be offset by other duties which, if fulfilled with equal faithfulness, will save the character from degradation,^{3/4}from a degradation into weakness and servility, which would surely follow were this second class of duties neglected. Herein lies an illustration of the Apostle James' warning: "*Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,*"(James 2:10).

408. Let us illustrate: It is recorded that men did not learn how to fly, with all their efforts, until first they discovered the important fact that the wind never drives steadily forward in its prevailing direction, but advances and recedes,^{3/4}so that there is always present a to and fro motion of the air. It is by turning first this wing and then that, to allow for these contrary currents to play upon its wings, that the bird and birdman rise in the air. Just so, we rise in virtue by keeping *our balance* amid the duties of life; and we may sink, for want of proper balance, if any duty is overlooked or neglected. An unbalanced virtue becomes quickly a source of degradation. Let us keep all points but one of the law, and we will soon begin to fail.

409. Humility and meekness, then, will not elevate the character unless they are *real*; and unless balanced by other equally important virtues. And it has been by the exclusion of these other duties as "*unwomanly*" that woman has been allowed, not to rise, but to sink, through her mere non-resistance of evil. Let this one current of non-resistance prevail alone, to the exclusion of their off-setting duties, and the woman sinks, as would a bird trying to fly with one wing. This accounts for much of the degradation of womanhood which we see around us.

410. But what are these balancing duties? We must turn to our Pattern, Jesus Christ, to find out. Again we must remind ourselves that women have but *one pattern* to follow, and at this point her feet have often been led astray from the path of woman's duties. God did not send a *female* Christ into this world to guide woman in a *female* manner, by setting her a pattern of "*womanliness*;" He only sent a man "*made of a woman,*" alone, and therefore sufficiently womanly and sufficiently manly for each sex to find in Jesus Christ a perfect *Pattern*, for both

sexes, in all the duties of life. Let woman fail to completely follow this Pattern, and she is as much a failure, as a Christian, as is the man who fails to completely follow His example in all things.

411. In all the Bible no sin is held up to human contempt more than Esau's. Now we readily imagine that Esau, after he had *sold out his birthright*, might attempt to bolster up his self-respect by putting a gloss of virtue over his sin. "See how I loved Jacob! See how self-effacing I have been! Behold my meekness! In my humility I gave my brother the chief place." But God would say to all this, "*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*" God turns away with loathing from the sin of the self-indulgent shirk. Such "virtuous" veneer is not thick enough to hide woeful self-indulgence as its mainspring. Women need to study well the lesson. Woman was created as a help "meet," sufficient for man; and because it was "not good" for him to be alone. And later, by all he had lost *she* was left sole heir of a great inheritance,^{3/4}to furnish the seed for a better race. She has fulfilled her call in part, by the virginal birth of Jesus Christ. Its complete fulfillment implies a large spiritual progeny growing out of the spiritual activity of woman. She must not sell her birthright (for it is the same one, except greater, that Esau sold), by a vicious self-effacement.

412. That is sham virtue in woman which lends a cloak or gives stimulus to vice in man. "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*" That which begets virtue in others *is* virtue; that which begets vice *is* vice. A wifely self-immolation which encourages masculine sensuality is vice. A feminine "humility" which gives place for the growth of masculine egotism is vice. Women need to ponder these things, and their responsibility (as the mothers and trainers of the men of the world), for the *lack* of gentleness, meekness, humility and chastity among men. Women must train their sons in *all* these virtues.

413. There stands a mysterious prophecy, relating to woman which no scholar who accepts the rabbinical view as to the inferior rank of woman in the divine economy is capable of understanding or interpreting. The guesses at its meaning would fill a considerable niche in a museum of literary curiosities. We refer to Jer. 31:22, which is translated: "*How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.*" But, as there is no word for the article "a" in the Hebrew tongue, we are at liberty to read the last phrase, "woman shall compass man," or, more literally, "female shall compass male." The verb "wilt . . . go about" (HEB), in the first clause of this verse, is found only in one other place in the Hebrew, Solomon's Song, 5:6, where it is translated "withdraw;" but following the marginal reading of the R. V., it means, more properly, in the form used, "to turn [oneself] away." The second verb of the verse, translated "backsliding," means also "to turn," and is translated 'turn' in the previous verse. Now it is the third verb, translated "compass," which has puzzled men most of all; it has led to a lot of different translation and interpretations; the verb (HEB) seems to mean also to "turn about." It is generally translated "compass." Now what does the whole verse mean? (1) The precise form of the latter verb is translated "led about," in Deuteronomy 32:10, "*He found him in a waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him.*" (2) Once again "new" is an adjective, used in the sense of "something new." We suggest this rendering: *How long wilt thou keep turning away, O thou turning away daughter? for the Lord hath created [something] new in the earth, Female will lead male about.* In other words, it seems God's design that the "new woman" in Christ Jesus, shall no more "turn away," as did Eve, to her husband, but remaining loyal to God alone, and true to her

destiny as the mother of that Seed,^{3/4}both the literal, Jesus, and the mystical Christ, the Church,^{3/4}shall lead man about,^{3/4}out of the wilderness of the inefficiency of egotism into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For, who shall specially conquer Satan, if not the sex to whom God gave the honor from the beginning of being in eternal enmity against Satan, in the promise, "*I will put enmity between thee and the woman?*" But woman must be truly meek to fulfill this her promised destiny.^[2]

414. But none of God's promises are the mere reading of fate. That which God promises will never be fulfilled excepting to those who *seize the promise*. God overrides no human will. But as woman has passed through a long night of travail to bring forth the sons of men on earth, so shall God render to her double for all she has undeservedly suffered through the cruelty and slight and disrespect of man, by giving her a very large share in the work of saving the world through the preaching of the Gospel, if woman will not despise her birthright.

^[2] Prof. Mingana remarks here, "I do not believe that your translation is certain, although I feel convinced that the English version is here hopelessly wrong."

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