

While the inferior and secondary position of woman early became an integral portion of Christianity, its fullest efforts are seen in Church teachings regarding marriage. Inasmuch as it was a cardinal doctrine that the fall of Adam took place through his temptation into marriage by Eve, this relation was regarded with holy horror as a continuance of the evil which first brought sin into the world, depriving man of his immortality.¹ It is a notable fact that the expected millennium of a thousand years upon earth with its material joys has ever had more attraction for Christians than the eternal spiritual rapture of heaven. Many of the old Fathers taught that "the world is a state of matrimony, but paradise of virginity."² To such extent was this doctrine carried it was declared that had it not have been for the fall, God would have found some way outside of this relation for populating the world, consequently marriage was regarded as a condition of peculiar temptation and trial; celibacy as one of especial holiness.

WOMAN, CHURCH AND STATE: By Matilda Joslyn Gage. [1893]

CHAPTER II. CELIBACY.

The androgynous theory of primal man found many supporters, the separation into two beings having been brought about by sensual desire. Jacob Boehme and earlier mystics of that class recognized the double sexuality of God in whose image man was made. One of the most revered ancient Scriptures, "The Gospel according to the Hebrews," which was in use as late as the second century of the Christian era, taught the equality of the feminine in the Godhead; also that daughters should inherit with sons. Thirty-three fragments of this Gospel have recently been discovered. The fact remains undeniable that at the advent of Christ, a recognition of the feminine element in the divinity had not entirely died out from general belief, the earliest and lost books of the New Testament teaching this doctrine, the whole confirmed by the account of the birth and baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit,³ the feminine creative force, playing the most important part. It was however but a short period before the church through Canons and Decrees,

character remain. Not until the exact and permanent equality of woman with man is recognized by the church, aye, even more, the greater power and capacity of woman in the creative function, together with the accountability of man to woman in everything relating to the birth of a new being, is fully accepted as a law of nature, will vice and crime disappear from the world. Until that time has fully come, prostitution in its varied forms will continue to exist, together with alms-houses, reformatories, jails, prisons, hospitals and asylums for the punishment, reformation or care of the wretched beings who have come into existence with an inheritance of disease and crime because of church theory and church teaching.

[...]

As well as apostolic and private teaching, denied the femininity of the Divine equally with the divinity of the feminine. There is however abundant proof that even under but partial recognition of the feminine principle as entering in the divinity, woman was officially recognized in the early services of the church, being ordained to the ministry, officiating as deacons, administering the act of baptism, dispensing the sacrament, interpreting doctrines and founding sects which received their names.⁴ [...] Despite the favoring views of a class regarding marriage, celibacy was taught as the highest condition for both man and woman, and as early as the third century many of the latter entered upon a celibate life, Jerome using his influence in its favor. Augustine, while admitting the possibility of salvation to the married, yet speaking of a mother and daughter in heaven, compared the former to a star of the second magnitude, but the latter as shining with great brilliancy. [...]

Creator, and this doctrine taught as one of the most sacred mysteries of religion which to doubt was to insure her eternal damnation, it is not strange that the great body of women are not now more outspoken in demanding equal religious and governmental rights with man. But another phase of heredity shows itself in the eagerness with which women enter all phases of public life which does not place them in open antagonism with Church or State. Education, industries, club life and even those great modern and religious organizations which bring them before the public, throwing active work and responsibility upon them, would be entirely unexplainable were it not for the tendency of inherited thought to ultimately manifest itself. [...]

As long as the church maintains the doctrine that woman was created inferior to man, and brought sin into the world, rendering the sacrifice of the Son of a God a necessity, just so long will the foundation of vice and crime of every

The Christianity of the ages teaching the existence of a superior and inferior sex, possessing different rights under the law and in the church, it has been easy to bring man and woman under accountability to a different code of morals. For this double code the church is largely indebted to the subtle and acute Paul, who saw in the new religion but an enlarged Judaism that should give prominence to Abraham and his seed from whom Christ claimed descent. His conversion did not remove his old Jewish contempt for woman, as shown in his temple service, the law forbidding her entrance beyond the outer court. Nor could he divest himself of the spirit of the old morning prayer which daily led each Jew to thank God that he was not born a heathen, a slave or a woman. [...] The influence of church teaching is most strikingly manifested in the thought of to-day. Without predetermined intention of wrong doing, man has been so molded by the Church doctrine of

ages and the coordinate laws of State as to have become blind to the justice of woman's demand for freedom such as he possesses. Nor is woman herself scarcely less bound, although now torn by the spirit of rebellion which burned in the hearts of her fore-mothers, so cruelly persecuted, so falsely judged, during past ages, when the most devout Christian woman possessed no rights in the church, the government or the family. The learning which had been hers in former periods, was then interdicted as an especial element of evil. Her property rights recognized in former periods then denied; as a being subordinate to man she was not allowed a separate estate or control over the earnings of her own hands. Her children were not her own but those of a master for whose interest or pleasure she had given them birth. Without freedom of thought or action, trained to consider herself secondary to a man, a being who came into the world not as part of the great original plan of creation but as an afterthought of her