

**WOMAN'S TRUE
POWER AND
RIGHTFUL WORK**

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Woman's True Power and Rightful Work by Isha

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ISHA

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By ISHA,

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WOMAN'S TRUE POWER AND RIGHTFUL WORK.

CHAPTER I.

WOMAN'S EQUALITY WITH MAN A TRUE INSTINCT.

OF late years, among men as well as among women, there has arisen a conviction and expression of feeling, which cannot be rejected or ignored, in favour of the right of Woman to be placed on equal terms with Man, as regards the benefits and privileges of this life. None but the very bigoted and narrow-minded, can persuade themselves that such uprisings of thought and effort are entirely void of a claim to consideration, even from those who have the least sympathy with them.

Neither is it consistent with general experience to take for granted, that any strong and persistent desires of the human heart will be proved to have been founded on that which is false, however mistaken in idea the special *methods* may have been, by which a true instinct has endeavoured to assert itself as worthy of respect.

That there is not only an instinct of Nature, but of a most undoubted Truth, in the widely spread attempt to place woman on an equality with man, is incapable of contradiction, if its explanation be sought (as all true knowledge alone is found) not in men's, but in God's teaching. But to own an *instinct* true, on which a great and disturbing movement is founded, is by no means to yield the same consent to the movement itself, as the right method of proving the truth on which it relies.

On the contrary, every great Truth has been made the excuse again and again, for the erection on, or in connection with it of Falsehood, out of which has gone forth into the

world every conceivable folly and mistake. The equality of woman with man as a future fact, may safely be asserted as a "great truth"; because in addition to the instinct which man has that woman is spiritually his equal, her claim to be so is to be found through the teaching of inspired Scripture, by which also her earthly inferiority is asserted.

Admitting, then, that the *instinct* of woman's equality with man is true, it remains to ascertain whether, as yet, the methods adopted for proving the theory are worthy of it, or capable of attaining their desired end. To do this, there is no occasion to discuss or denounce those means which have commended themselves to minds equally sincere and bold, in demanding for woman worldly equality with man. But it may be assumed that such an effort—which is of necessity restricted in its success, and limited to a very small fraction of womankind—will be found to be quite inadequate to the task of raising them *generally* to an acknowledged equality with man; while it more than endangers their admitted claim

to be honoured by him, because, as "the weaker vessel," woman is dependent on his forbearance and justice.

There is, too, a better way of proving what is mistaken, than by depreciating it; and that is to seek, and try when found, the right way. Now, the "right way" which shall avail to make the world accept woman as man's equal, and, therefore, in *all* things a sharer of the benefits of law and civilisation, must be one which is open to the whole race, high and low, poor and rich, educated and ignorant, married and unmarried, old and young, alike. For, if it is any less comprehensive in its reach and power than this, it cannot raise *Woman*, who, as a *whole*, receives no benefit from individual instances of allowed equality with man; but who must be *collectively* raised, to reap any solid advantage from man's acknowledgment of her as his equal before God.

To ascertain if woman holds the power of thus raising herself, alone and unaided, the world has but to realize how, apart from man, she had power to throw open God's

creation to the rule of sin and death ; while man had no sufficient strength given to *him* to enable him to resist her overwhelming influence ; even while he acknowledged, by his after excuses, the absence of any motive for his own sin of disobedience, beyond that of the woman's persuasions.

By her own act, woman called down on herself the curse of servitude and inferiority, by which she was degraded from the equality of a "help meet" for man, to that of one whose will was to become subservient to his. And this punishment, consequent upon her own sin, first of disregard of God's command, and finally of making use of her power with man to cause him to do likewise, she bears still ; nor will she be released from it, so long as man finds in woman his tempter and misleader into contempt of God and His laws.

By her own act also, therefore, she must secure and hold, as an actual reality, her freedom from a bondage (self-imposed, through former misuse of her Power), which is capable of alleviation only so far as

obedience to Divine Law is Woman's rule ; and which having been the consequence of her own, and not of Man's sin, does not depend on his will for remission. On this assumption is based the present endeavour to shew both the extent of Woman's Power and the necessity for a right appreciation of it.

The foregoing words, "tempter and mis-leader," objectionable as they are to our instinctive sense of what woman was intended for, are those which alone express the real act and full sinfulness of the Earthly Mother of mankind.

She, having been herself betrayed into disobedience towards her Creator, completed the measure of her guilt by following the example of the Evil power by which she had been beguiled ; and put forth the influence wherewith God had endowed her over the man, to entice him away from obedience and peace, to rebellion and ruin.

Her daughters, whether they will or no, inherit the *power* to lead man ; and those