

*Why women should avoid the Church like a plague*



More shadows than light (1862) Albert Bierstadt

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## Foreword by the Series Editor

There are three keys to the inmost meaning of humility, which is purely astronomical and occult:

- 1 The humiliation of the Spirit of Light descending into the darkness of matter, a kosmic and karmic necessity.
- 2 The paronomasia of Chrēstos in Scorpio (humiliation), and of Christos in Leo (triumph).
- 3 The astronomical fall and rise of the Sons of Light.

The lowering of the Sun into the pit of matter was pictured as a scull with crossed bones over the mouth of the vagina. To the profane, this lugubrious image suggests death; to the Initiate, the most precious emblem of life.

As death was considered the greatest evil, the vagina became the origin of sin and hence an object of hate. Then the Christian Fathers had a field day, unleashing a chorus of shameful and shocking slurs on women, thus raising ecclesiastical misogyny to new heights.

HIERONYMUS VON MANSFELD

**Note to Visitors** — This document is intended for advanced students of Esotericism. If you have stumbled upon here unprepared you are more likely to be confused than enlightened.

**Note to Students** — “Jesus Ben Pandira, the historical Christ,” “Crucified between two thieves,” and “Humility is no virtue,” in our Buddhas and Initiates Series, should be studied first and in that order.

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## Burning heretics and witches by the hecatomb is neither culture nor progress

### It is evidence that Church is dead.

**W**E, OF THE CENTURY CLAIMING ITSELF as the XIX<sup>th</sup> of *our* era, are very proud of our Progress and Civilization — Church and Churchmen attributing both to the advent of Christianity — “Blot Christianity out of the pages of man’s history,” they say, “and what would his laws have been? — what his civilization?” Aye; “not a law which does not owe its truth and gentleness to Christianity, not a custom which cannot be traced in all its holy and healthful parts to the Gospel.”

What an absurd boast, and how easily refuted!

To discredit such statements one has but to remember that our laws are based on those of Moses — life for life and tooth for tooth; to recall the laws of the *holy* Inquisition *i.e.*, the burning of heretics and witches by the hecatomb, on the slightest provocation; the alleged right of the wealthiest and the strongest to sell their servants and fellow men into slavery, not to carry into effect the curse bestowed on Ham, but simply “to purchase the luxuries of Asia by supplying the slave market of the Saracens;”<sup>1</sup> and finally the *Christian* laws upheld to this day in England, and called women’s *disabilities*, social and political. Moreover, as in the blessed days of our forefathers’ ignorance, we meet now with such choice bits of unblushing *blague*<sup>2</sup> as this, “We speak of our civilization, our arts, our freedom, our laws, and forget entirely *how large a share of all is due to Christianity.*”<sup>3</sup>

Just so! “our laws and our arts,” but neither “our civilization” nor “our freedom.” No one could contradict the statement that these were won in spite of the most terrible opposition by the Church during long centuries, and in the face of her repeated and loud anathemas against civilization and freedom and the defenders of both. And yet, notwithstanding fact and truth, it is being constantly urged that even the elevated

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<sup>1</sup> *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, by H.H. Hallam, LL.D., F.R.A.S., p. 473 [1871 ed.]. The author adds:

“This trade was not peculiar to Venice. In England, it was very common, even after the Conquest, to export slaves to Ireland; till in the reign of Henry II, the Irish came to a non-importation agreement which put a stop to the practice.”

And then, in a footnote:

“William of Malmsbury accuses the Anglo-Saxon nobility of selling their female servants, even when pregnant by them, as slaves to foreigners.” This is the Christian mode of dealing as Abraham with Hagar with a vengeance!

<sup>2</sup> [mendacious boasting, humbug.]

<sup>3</sup> Rose

position (?!) of the Christian woman as compared with her “heathen” sister, is entirely the work of Christianity! Were it true, this would at best be but a poor compliment to pay to a religion which claims to supersede all others. As it is not true, however — Lecky, among many other serious and trustworthy writers, having shown that “in the whole feudal legislation (of Christendom) women were placed *in a much lower legal position than in the Pagan Empire*” — the sooner and the oftener this fact is mentioned the better it will be for plain truth. Besides this, our ecclesiastical laws are honeycombed as has been said, with the Mosaic element. It is *Leviticus* not the Roman code, which is the creator and inspirer of legislation — in Protestant countries, at any rate.

Progress, says Carlyle, is “living movement.” This is true; but it is so only on the condition that no dead weight, no corpse shall impede the freedom of that “living movement.” Now in its uncompromising conservatism and unspirituality the Church is no better than a dead body. Therefore it did and still does impede true progress. Indeed, so long as the Church — the deadliest enemy of the ethics of Christ — was in power, there was hardly any progress at all. It was only after the French Revolution that real culture and civilization had a fair start.

Those ladies who claim day after day and night after night with such earnest and passionate eloquence, at “Woman’s Franchise League” meetings, their legitimate share of rights as mothers, wives and citizens, and still attend “divine” service on Sundays — prosecute at best the unprofitable business of boring holes through sea water. It is not the laws of the country that they should take to task, but the Church and chiefly themselves. It is the *Karma* of the women of our era. It was generated with Mary Magdalene, got into practical expression at the hands of the mother of Constantine, and found an ever renewed strength in every Queen and Empress “by the grace of God.” Judean Christianity owes its life to a woman — *une sublime hallucinée*, as Renan puts it. Modern Protestantism and Roman Catholicism owe their illegitimate existence, again, to priest-ridden and church-going women; to the mother who teaches her son his first Bible lesson; to the wife or sister who forces her husband or brother to accompany her to church and chapel; to the emotional and hysterical spinster, the admirer of every popular preacher. And yet the predecessors of the latter have for fifteen centuries degraded women from every pulpit!

In *Lucifer* of October, 1889, in the article “The Women of Ceylon,” we can read the opinion of Principal Donaldson, LL.D., of the University of St. Andrews, about the degradation of woman by the Christian Church. This is what he said openly in the *Contemporary Review*:

It is a prevalent opinion that woman owes her present high position to Christianity. I used to believe in this opinion. But in the first three centuries I have not been able to see that Christianity had any favourable effect on the position of women, but, on the contrary, that it tended to lower their character and contract the range of their activity.

How very correct then, the remark of H.H. Gardener, that in the New Testament,

. . . the words sister, mother, daughter, and wife, are only names for degradation and dishonour!

**The Church is ungrateful to woman, and woman is no worse than a willing martyr.**

That the above is a fact, may be seen in various works, and even in certain *Weeklies*. “Saladin” of the *Agnostic* gives in his last “At Random” eloquent proofs of the same by bringing forward dozens of quotations. Here are a few of these:

Mrs. Mary A. Livermore says: “The early Church fathers denounced women as noxious animals, necessary evils, and domestic perils.”

Lecky says: “Fierce invectives against the sex form a conspicuous and grotesque portion of the writings of the fathers.”

Mrs. Stanton says that holy books and the priesthood teach that “woman is the author of sin, who [in collusion with the devil] effected the fall of man.”

Gamble says that in the fourth century holy men gravely argued the question, “Ought women to be called human beings?”

But let the Christian fathers speak for themselves. Tertullian, in the following flattering manner, addresses woman: “You are the devil’s gateway;<sup>1</sup> the unsealer of the forbidden tree; the first deserter from the divine law. You are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed God’s image — man.”

Clement of Alexandria says: “It brings shame to reflect of what nature woman is.”

Gregory Thaumaturgus says: “One man among a thousand may be pure; a woman, never.”

“Woman is the organ of the devil.” — St. Bernard.

“Her voice is the hissing of the serpent.” — St. Anthony.

“Woman is the instrument which the devil uses to get possession of our souls.” — St. Cyprian.

“Woman is a scorpion.” — St. Bonaventure.

“The gate of the devil, the road of iniquity.” — St. Jerome.

“Woman is a daughter of falsehood, a sentinel of hell, the enemy of peace.” — St. John Damascene.

“Of all wild beasts the most dangerous is woman.” — St. John Chrysostom.

“Woman has the poison of an asp, the malice of a dragon.” — St. Gregory the Great.

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<sup>1</sup> [The following footnote is appended to a translation of Śrī Śamkarāchārya’s *Prasnottaramala*, wherein to the question: “What is the door of hell? the answer is given: “The woman.”

Tertullian also said that woman was the gateway of the devil. Is this allegorical or may not woman equally say that man is the “door of hell” from the same point of view? In the phraseology of Occultism, the lower Quaternary (the four lower “principles”) is considered *male*, while of the three higher Principles, Ātma and Manas are held to be sexless and Buddhi (Soul) female.

— *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MISCELLANEOUS NOTES) XIII pp. 164-65]

Is it surprising, with such instructions from the fathers, that the children of the Christian Church should *not* “look up to women, and consider them men’s equals”?

Withal, it is emotional woman who, even at this hour of progress, remains as ever the chief supporter of the Church! Nay it is she again who is the sole cause, if we have to believe the Bible allegory, that there is any Christianity or churches at all. For only imagine where would be both, had not our mother Eve listened to the tempting Serpent. First of all there would be no sin. Secondly, the Devil having been thwarted, there would be no need of any Redemption at all, nor of any woman to have “seed” in order that it should “bruise under its heel the serpent’s head”; and thus there would be neither Church nor Satan. For as expressed by our old friend Cardinal Ventura di Raulica, Serpent-Satan is “one of the fundamental dogmas of the Church, and serves as a basis for Christianity.”<sup>1</sup> Take away that basis and the whole struggle topples overboard into the dark waters of oblivion.

Therefore, we pronounce the Church ungrateful to woman, and the latter no worse than a willing martyr; for if her enfranchisement and freedom necessitated more than an average moral courage a century ago, it requires very little now; only a firm determination. Indeed, if the ancient and modern writers may be believed, in real culture, freedom, and self-dignity the woman of our century has placed herself far beneath the ancient Aryan mother, the Egyptian — of whom Wilkinson and Buckle say that she had the greatest influence and liberty, social, religious and political among her countrymen — and even the Roman matron. The late Peary Chand Mitra has shown, *Manu* in hand, to what supremacy and honour the women of ancient Āryāvarta had been elevated. The author of the *Women of Ancient Egypt* tells us that

“from the earliest times of which we can catch a glimpse, the women of Egypt enjoyed a freedom and independence of which modern nations *are only beginning to dream.*”

To quote once more from “At Random”:

Sir Henry Maine says: “. . . no society which preserves any tincture of Christian institution is likely to restore to married women the personal liberty conferred on them by the middle Roman law . . . ”<sup>2</sup>

The cause of “Woman’s Rights” was championed in Greece five centuries before Christ.

Helen H. Gardener says: “When the Pagan law recognised her [the wife] as the equal of her husband, the Church discarded that law.”

Lecky says: “In the legends of early Rome we have ample evidence both of the high moral estimate of women and of their prominence in Roman life. The tragedies of Lucretia and of Virginia display a delicacy of honour and a sense of the supreme excellence of unsullied purity which no Christian nation can surpass.”

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<sup>1</sup> [Gougenot des Mousseaux, *Mœurs et pratiques des démons*, p. x]

<sup>2</sup> [*Ancient Law*, p. 158]

Sir Henry Maine, in his *Ancient Law*,<sup>1</sup> says that “the inequality and oppression which related to women disappeared from Pagan laws,” and adds: “the consequence was that the situation of the Roman female whether married or unmarried became one of great personal and proprietary independence . . . but Christianity tended somewhat from the very first to narrow this remarkable liberty.” He further says that “the jurisconsults of the day contended for better laws for wives, but the Church prevailed in most instances, and established the most oppressive ones.”

Professor Draper, in his *Intellectual Development of Europe*, gives certain facts as to the outrageous treatment of women by Christian men (the clergy included) which it would be exceedingly indelicate in me to repeat.

Moncure D. Conway says: “There is not a more cruel chapter in history than that which records the arrest, by Christianity, of the natural growth of European civilisation regarding women.”

Neander, the Church historian, says: “Christianity diminishes the influence of woman.”

### **Woman should avoid the Church like a plague.**

Thus, it is amply proved that instead of an “elevated” position, it is a *degraded* one to which Christianity (or rather “Churchianity”) has brought woman. Apart from this, woman has nought to thank it for.

And now, a word of good advice to all the members of Leagues and other societies connected with Woman’s Rights. In our days of culture and progress, now that it is shown that in *Union* alone lies strength, and that tyrants can be put down only by their own weapons; and that finally we find that nothing works better than a “strike” — let all the champions of women’s rights strike, and pledge themselves not to set foot in church or chapel until their rights are re-established and their equality with men recognized by law. We prophesy that before six months are over every one of the Bishops in Parliament will work as jealously as themselves to bring in bills of reformation and pass them. Thus will Mosaic and Talmudic law be defeated to the glory of — WOMAN.<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> [pp. 153, 155, 156, 159]

<sup>2</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PROGRESS AND CULTURE) XII pp. 266-72; [full text in our Blavatsky Speaks Series. — ED. PHIL.]



## What the Church Fathers really thought of women

The author of *The Origin and Destiny of Man*,<sup>1</sup> has collected various holy statements as to this:

[A fairly literal translation, kindly provided by Professor Christopher Tuplin, is now placed below; and the original Latin text, at the foot of the page. — ED. PHIL.]

The body of a woman is fire,<sup>2</sup> says a holy person.<sup>3</sup>

“O evil and sharpest weapon of the devil, woman!”<sup>4</sup> exclaims St. Chrysostom; “Through woman the devil overthrew Adam in Paradise and expelled him from Paradise.”<sup>5</sup>

St. Augustine says: “A woman cannot teach nor can she be a witness nor give her word nor be a judge; how much the more can she not exert command?”<sup>6</sup>

St. John of Damascene says: “Woman is an evil beast, a crawling worm, and one having its domicile in Adam, daughter of the lie, prisoner of Paradise, expeller of Adam, pernicious enemy, foe of peace.”<sup>7</sup>

St. Peter Chrysologus, Bishop of Ravenna, says that she is “cause for evils, author of sin, the inscription on a tomb, gate of hell, and the complete necessity of grief.”<sup>8</sup>

St. Anthony says: “Head of sin, weapons of the devil. When you see a woman, believe that you are seeing not a human being, not a wild beast, but the devil.”<sup>9</sup> Her voice is a “serpent’s hiss.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Arthur Dyott Thomson, *On Mankind, their Origin and Destiny*, 1872, Vol. 1 of 2, p. 145]

<sup>2</sup> *Corpus mulieris ignis est.*

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. “From being loved the serpent came to be hated, and poor Woman, as the exciter of passion, got conjoined in this hatred. Austere hermits and Sannyāsīs (men under a vow) pictured women as the demons with darts and stings, who tempted their passions in their state of violation of the laws of nature; her presence they taunted and felt was a burning fire, and her sacred touch contamination. Lecky tells us (II, 36) of a Christian man who shrank from touching his mother, and wrapped up his hands in cloths when required in an extremity to do so, exclaiming “sic corpus mulieris ignis est” a remark which also, shows how closely Phallic worship is connected with Fire or Sun, and Serpent-worship.” Major-General J.G.R. Forlong, *Rivers of Life, etc.*, London 1883, Vol. I, p. 338]

<sup>4</sup> *O malum et acutissimum telum diaboli, mulier!*

<sup>5</sup> *Per mulierem Adam in Paradiso diabolus prostravit, et de Paradiso exterminavit.*

<sup>6</sup> *Mulier docere non potest, nee testis esse, neque fidem dicere, neque judicare, quanto magis non potest imperare?*

<sup>7</sup> *Mulier jumentum malum, vermis repens, atque in Adamo domicilium habens, mendacii filia, Paradisi custodia, Adami expellatrix, hostis pernitiosa, pacis inimica.*

<sup>8</sup> *Malis causa, peccati auctor, sepulchri titulus, inferni janua, et lamenti necessitas tota.*

<sup>9</sup> *Caput peccati, arma diaboli. Cum mulierem vides, non hominem, non belluam, sed diabolum esse credite.*

St. Cyprian would sooner hear “a serpent hiss,”<sup>2</sup> than a woman singing.

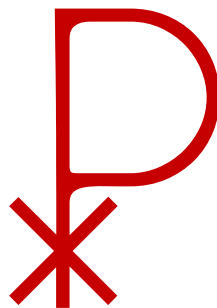
St. Bonaventura compares women to the scorpion, which is always ready to sting man. They are, he says, “the weapons and catapult of the devil.”<sup>3</sup>

Eusebius of Caesarea says that woman is “arrow of the devil.”<sup>4</sup>

Gregory the Great: “a virtuous woman does not know how to teach.”<sup>5</sup>

St. Jerome: “If a woman be left to her own control, she will quickly go to the bad.”<sup>6</sup> And again: “A really good woman is rare than a phoenix.”<sup>7</sup> And again: “Gate of the devil, road of iniquity, the bite of a scorpion, a noxious race.”<sup>8</sup>

The church’s opinion of women would be something fearful to contemplate, in connection with the necessity of their being the only mothers, sisters, and refining companions of man, were it not that this opinion was taken from these ancient glyphs and unificating necessities.<sup>9</sup>



A scull with crossed bones over the mouth of the vagina

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<sup>1</sup> *Serpentis sibilus.*

<sup>2</sup> *Basiliscum sibilantem.*

<sup>3</sup> *Arma et balista diaboli.*

<sup>4</sup> *Sagitta diaboli.*

<sup>5</sup> *Mulier recta docere nescit.*

<sup>6</sup> *Si mulier suo arbitrio relinquatur, cito ad deteriora delabitur.*

<sup>7</sup> *Optima foemina rarior est phoenice.*

<sup>8</sup> *Janua diaboli, via iniquitatis, scorpionis percussio, nocivum genus.*

<sup>9</sup> Edited from J. Ralston Skinner’s *Key to the Hebrew-Egyptian Mystery in the Source of Measures, etc.*, (1875); Appendix V, “Other Types and Teachings” (h) pp. 254-55. Consult full text in our Constitution of Man Series. — ED. PHIL.