

We can but expect the religious nature of Adam to be prominently set forth, but we catch a glimpse of the sublimity of soul and pure desires, belonging to a sinless life, in that devout hymn, put into the mouths of the first pair at the beginning of Book V. Obedience to the will of God is Adam's highest duty, and if he fails, it is only because of his love for Eve. His reason is never overthrown, but it is because Eve is "dearer than himself," that rather than lose her, he tastes the fruit

"Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought Death into the world and all our woe."

It would be interesting here to note Milton's conception of womanhood and her relation to man. For Adam is not complete without Eve, who is the "best image of himself, his dearer half." Created side by side, they are possessed of widely different attributes. In accordance with Bible teaching, it is the wife's duty to obey and lean upon her husband,

"For contemplation he, and valor formed,  
For softness she, and sweet attractive grace.  
He for God only, she for God in him.  
His fair large front and eye sublime  
Declared absolute rule" but

"Eve's golden tresses in wanton ringlets wave, implied subjection" through as Milton hastens to add "required with gentle sway." Satan accomplishes Eve's fall through what Milton calls in *Samson Agonistes*

"A weakness incident to all the sex,  
Curiosity, inquisitive, impertune of secrets."

Yet Milton never describes woman as inferior to man, but always at his side. His "Ode to the memory of his deceased wife" is a beautiful and touching tribute to perfect womanhood.

Milton's conception of perfection in man is indeed a noble one. Reflecting as it does the Puritan age in which he lived, and whose representative poet he is, it partakes of the virtues and to some extent the faults of that Party. His ideal man is brave, heroic, temperate; he is patriotic, chaste in love, pious and virtuous. We miss in him, however, that note of sympathy with mankind and nature which was also wanting in the Puritan. If man is to achieve his noblest ends, he cannot dwell apart from his fellows, but must enter into their feelings, sympathize with their griefs and weaknesses, rejoice in their joys. Milton's ideal man is complete in himself, but fails in that sympathy and tenderness which is the peculiar glory of the ideal of the New Testament.

To-day some of the ideals are more fully realized than in his own day—notably liberty of mind and speech, yet if in search for a motto, the thought of which will guide our lives, might what better could we choose than the closing words of *Comas*;—

"Mortals that would follow me;  
Love virtue she alone is free: