

wrongs until they are righted? Until they, too, are given different ideas of religion, respectability and right, they will be the greatest opponents of reform on their behalf. Women are the religious ones in every nation, and in India they are the ones who stickle so intensely for the old ways, customs and caste. No matter how deeply a young widow suffers herself, in being shorn of her hair, often no one is harder than she as time goes on, on younger widows that they should follow in the same steps of suffering. A Brahmin neighbor of ours had two widows in his family, who were of the most orthodox type. In the course of conversation with one of them one day, he kindly proposed that she should re-marry. At the mere suggestion, notwithstanding all she had suffered, she burst into tears. She regarded it as an insult. It would not be respectable! It is the women of the household that many educated Hindus fear almost more than aught else. Men who will declaim against child marriage, caste and enforced widowhood in public, have not courage when they go home to face the women of the household. Their tears and entreaties win the day. We know one gentleman who lost his wife. Immediately his mother proposed marriage with a little girl. He pleaded to be allowed to remain single. But no, the mother persisted. Then he begged to be allowed to marry a woman nearer his own age, who under the circumstances would have to be a widow. At this all the female relatives rose in a solid rank against it. They were uneducated; they had never shared his thought of reform. Finally the mother threatened to commit suicide, which she probably would have carried out, and the man yielded at a sacrifice of all his conviction, of all his public utterances that had done so much good, and married the girl-wife. Children are timid and shrinking, and some one has suggested that it is from child mothers, that Hindus inherit their lack of courage. Yes, Indian women have great influence, and know how to use it, but how often it is in the wrong direction. God meant that woman should have great influence. He meant that she should be man's help-meet and comforter. It was perhaps from the memory of such scenes as we have described, that, in speaking of the influence of women in the homes of India as in other countries, Keshub Chundra Sen said in a humorous way in an address in England: "Woman has been defined as an adjective agreeing with the noun, man. I should rather say that man is a noun in the objective case governed by woman!"

Neither are the women of India inferior to the women of other lands. Given the same opportunity they are the equals of any women. We have found many who had all the possibilities of the career of noble women, save they were handicapped by ignorance and the disabilities under which they have lived. And such women are not confined only to the high castes. We once knew for a number of years a sweeper woman who was a most remarkable character had she but had half a chance. Unhappily her life was turned into evil channels, and yet her neighbours called her the "Begum," a lady! There are thousands of women all over the land that, were they not warped by iron custom, and handicapped by cruel public opinion, and were they given a purpose in life, would leave their mark upon the Indian world.

Indian women are loving and affectionate and faithful; and, says the *Indian Witness*, "they are entitled to the greatest admiration for the wonderfully patient manner in which they accept their hard lot and make the best of their gloomy environments."

We are grateful for what has been accomplished in female education, and for the enlightened Hindu ladies we meet, here and there, but the real emancipation of Indian women will never come, except through the Gospel of Christ. This is the *real* remedy for the Wrongs of Indian Womanhood, and this is what has elevated women in other lands, and is waiting to do the same for India.

Culture and civilization alone will never raise woman to her true position. Whatever of civilization at present is worth anything in Christian nations is the outcome of the religion of Jesus Christ. The true elevation of women in these nations is due to this, and this alone. Turn over the pages of history with us and see if this is not true. What do we find to be the condition of women in any land outside of Christendom, either in the past or present?

Infanticide has prevailed in some form or other in every nation; "polygamy has prevailed over almost the whole expanse of Asia; that throughout the vast empire of China, and in the greater part of India, female children are betrothed in childhood; that in almost every pagan race, ancient or modern, females are given away in marriage without their own consent; that in many, they are bought and sold; that divorce can in most cases be had on easy terms; that not only the Brahmin of India, but the Polynesian savage and even the Negro slave of the West Indies will not allow their wives to eat with them; that intellectual culture, when apart from the sanctifying influences of Christianity, has nowhere checked—has rather precipitated—the derangement of the relation of the sexes to each other."

What did the high civilization of Greece and Rome, and the philosophies extant then, do for women? Says Dr. Murdock: "When Christianity was first made known in Europe, the state of Society in the most civilised nations was most corrupt. Adultery was a *fashionable* crime. . . . A single temple to the goddess, Venus, had a thousand prostitutes for its priestesses"; and he quotes a writer as saying, "The tender reverence for woman is no mere product of culture and civilization, for it was unknown to Greece and Rome in the zenith of their refinement. . . . It is the reflection on earth of that self-devoting love that brought the Son of God from heaven." And says the Rev. F. W. Robertson: "It was from that time forward that womanhood assumed a new place in the world, and steadily and gradually rose to a higher dignity in human life. It is not mere civilisation, but to the spirit of life in Christ that woman owes all she is, and all she has yet to gain."

The religion of Jesus Christ is not so much a system of doctrines, though this has its value, as it is a *life* that moulds and transforms the character of its believers. Says one: "It expelled cruelty, curbed passion, punished and repressed an execrable infanticide, drove shameless impurities of heathendom into a congenial darkness, freed the slave, protected the captive, sheltered the orphan, shrouded as with a halo of sacred innocence the tender years of a child, elevated woman, sanctified marriage from little more than a burdensome convention into little less than a blessed sacrament," and where men and women have received it, has made their hearts and lives so pure that has given to men a reverence and chivalrous care for women, and on the other hand, has so hallowed the character of woman, as to make the words, "mother," "sister," "wife and daughter," the tenderest words in the language of men.