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## Womanhood uplifted by Christ

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**Women's** issues continue to be of widespread interest in the world today as evidenced by the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held two summers ago, the gender discrimination issues argued before courts of law, and women's increasingly influential role in politics. For many, this interest indicates a desire to bring more freedom, justice, and compassion to women.

Many of the struggles facing women have their root in false concepts of woman's origin, identity, and purpose. For example, in the second chapter of the Bible's book of Genesis, the story of Adam and Eve portrays woman as a second-class citizen, subservient to man because she was created after him and made from a part of him.

Healing the effects of this incorrect view of womanhood requires replacing this paradigm with the understanding of God's Word, which reveals everyone's spiritual identity. The first chapter of Genesis clearly states this true identity: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" ([1:27](#)). The image of God is not defined or limited by gender but is complete and expresses the full range of all the qualities of God, including what we might think of as either female or male qualities. Dummelow's Bible commentary suggests that the creation of male and female was simultaneous. And *Science and Health* states, "With a

single command, Mind had made man, both male and female" ([p. 524](#)). In that light there is no dominator or dominated. Both male and female qualities are equally blessed of God.

Later, in the Adam and Eve story in chapter 3, the woman is beguiled by the serpent and used as a tool for the fall of man. Sexual harassment is rooted in these false concepts of man and woman. The harasser would appear to be carnally-minded, motivated by sensation in matter. But the Christ reveals true manhood as spiritual, pure, and motivated by Truth and Love. The person harassed, often a woman, would seem to be weak, a victim of circumstance. Yet the harassment is not really aimed at a person so much as at a material view of woman. Harassment can find no target in the spiritual concept of woman.

As a punishment for succumbing to the serpent's suggestions, Eve is to bring forth children in pain and sorrow. Indeed, this "curse" seems to begin at the initiation of womanhood with its sometimes discomfiting monthly cycles. In addition, the belief in pain and sorrow often manifests itself in childbirth, during difficult times in child rearing, and in the "empty nest" phase and menopause. But this "Eve" scenario is a false concept, a misinterpretation of the woman God makes, and through understanding God's creation, we can prove the mortal view of woman to be a lie.

Christ Jesus exemplified a spiritual regard for women. In one instance, his spiritual understanding brought freedom to a woman who had been crippled for eighteen years (see Luke 13:11–13). The Bible states that she was so bowed together that she "could in no wise lift up herself." Christ Jesus called the woman to him and said to her, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." The account then states that "immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

What expectancy and obedience the woman showed in going to Jesus even though she was bowed together. She couldn't lift herself up, but the healing power of the Christ could. It released her and made her straight, bringing to light the freedom of her true, spiritual identity, which is eternally upright and free. This real identity was not based on the scenario of a fallen woman bending to the ground. The Christ loosed her from that mortal identification and showed her to be upright, revealing her capacity as God's likeness to walk in the way of glorifying God. What a powerful example of the activity of the Christ dispelling the false Eve-like concept of woman and bringing healing!

The Christly understanding of the true woman made a healing difference in my experience, too, freeing me from pain and discomfort in childbirth. All three of my children were born at home, and the commonly accepted notion of inevitable pain was eliminated through the understanding that the curse on Eve was causeless.

Eve's punishment came from taking in the knowledge of both good and evil. This belief that both good and evil are real implies dual forces at work in opposite directions at once. But the understanding that there is no opposing force and that good is the only power eliminates the struggle. God only blesses His children.

I also found it comforting to understand that true creation is spiritual, governed by divine Principle and exemplifying an orderly unfoldment of good. *Science and Health* states, "Even in Christian Science, reproduction by Spirit's individual ideas is but the reflection of the creative power of the divine Principle of those ideas" ([pp. 302-303](#)). Giving birth is not a personal struggle or labor but a "reflection" of the creative power of God and of the omnipotence of Spirit. Reflecting is effortless, and this insight freed me from fears of prolonged labor. Also, understanding that nothing could separate me from feeling the love of God because Love is infinite released me from the fear of pain. I knew

that because God is all that is present, the love of His presence was all I could truly feel. All three births occurred without pain and prolonged labor, and were filled not with sorrow but with the buoyant joy of Soul, another name for God.

Holding the Christly view of woman and living this true idea will make a healing difference. Christ uplifts mankind's concept of womanhood, opening the way for the establishment of practices and laws that safeguard and cherish the dignity of *all* of God's creation.

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