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“Women,” 1902 November 9.

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Please return copy to Rabbi Moses J. Gries, 45 Oakdale St., City.

November 9, 1902.

W O M E N.

All the world loves a womanly woman. Woman is infinite in variety. Physically, she is beautiful and not beautiful. Intellectually, she is wise and ignorant. Morally, she is pure and impure. All of them are women. Real womanhood is not in beauty, nor in wisdom, but in character. The average woman is a helper--narrow in her path of life--narrow in her purposes, and narrow in her outlook. She helps--patiently and faithfully--to earn and to save for herself and her husband and her family--right intentioned, honest enough and moral enough. Education brings to her the larger outlook upon life, introduces her to the larger thought, and makes her divinely discontent with the drudgery of the house and the store and the office and the shop.

If some men are tailor-made, how are some women made?--truly fearfully and wonderfully made. I am not courageous enough to discuss women's fashions, nor is it the province of religion to prescribe the fashions of the world. Religion can but plead for simplicity and womanliness. O, the vanity of women, with their gay and gaudy plumage and their costly and useless luxuries--the peril and ruin of many a home! Let our best women, the best in character, set the

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example of a sensible simplicity, and not be slaves to Fashion with all her absurdities. Religion protests against woman's idolatrous worship of the ~~latter~~^{Godless} fashion. ¶ What waste of beauty, and grace, and intellect--of wit, and heart and soul! Is it woman's destiny to be only an ornament to adorn the world?--nothing more than to be arrayed in fine feathers--to glitter in the sunshine? Her ambitions are not the ambitions of men--success and money and fame--but her life has serious purposes and splendid ideals, worthy of the best of women. ¶ Woman should work for woman, and women should work for the world. Women are wage earners, more and more. The life of toil and business brings temptations and perils. It is the work of woman steadfastly to promote the wellbeing of her toiling sister, and to safeguard her everywhere. Thousands of women are outcast. They are ostracised. There is one moral law for man and woman. We must not excuse and we dare not justify man's immorality. Neither do we ^{the kind of} pardon ~~women~~ because of man's immorality. Woman has a religious duty to her unfortunate sisters. The fallen must be lifted up. Man expects of woman a finer virtue, a more delicate sense of decency, a higher refinement, cleaner speech and purer thought. And woman should demand of man the fair fame of a good name and the reputation of honor and a moral life. ¶ Woman may make the moral standard of the world. She has power to mold the public opinion of society, in which woman rules as queen, and man is not king, but subject. Woman more than man has power to sanctify marriage,

to consecrate the home, and to ~~enalt~~ the family. As woman is and as woman thinks, as woman judges--thus is the moral standard of a community.

Judaism is not a religion for women peculiarly. It has always emphasized most strongly the duty of men. Woman was free and not enslaved in ancient Israel, and the ancient Law of Moses recognized her right of inheritance, denied by some modern civilized nations. Judaism appeals less to emotion than to reason. It proclaims duty more than sacrifice and suffering. It demands justice more than love, though its old law book is full of the spirit of mercy and tenderness. *P* Women may be the strength of every church, but upon them has not been the responsibility for the synagogue. Our congregations prefer the family affiliation rather than the individual membership. Strange it seems to us that women should belong to one denomination or church, and men to another, or to none whatsoever. We would not destroy the family bond. Religion should unite, and not separate. Nor do we welcome the man who holds religion in ~~our~~ ^{his} wife's name. We desire that women should worship with the men--not instead of the men. Gladly, however, would we give to women larger representation and larger activity in the work of the temple, and together with men, have them study and solve our important problems.

Our women have been absorbed with practical religion--the work of philanthropy. Nobly have they toiled and sacrificed

for others. Is there not important work for ourselves and for our own? Our deepest interest should be in our own boys and girls, and sons and daughters, and men and women: that there may be healthful play for our boys and girls, and uplifting entertainment and the influence of culture and the religious life and the moral tone. We should be religiously helpful to our neighbors--busy mothers, absorbed in their cares and duties, or perhaps, in their pleasures. We should awaken the slumbering sense of their religious obligation to their children. Their children should not grow up without religious instruction.

The social life of the temple should be ^{de-}veloped. It offers to us all a pure social center. The club, whatever be its merits, is not the best substitute, nor yet the most helpful auxiliary to the home. What do we seek for our sons and daughters: the best influences, or the worst, or the mediocre? Welcome the noblest ^{st, males.} ~~is us.~~ Far rather unselfishness than selfishness. ^Women have immeasurable power for good. They can preserve reverence for sabbaths and holydays. They can create and foster the religious spirit. They can hallow life with religious customs. Through women, men may be led to think finer thoughts and to aspire to nobler deeds and purposes; and children may ^{be} trained and inspired to respect and reverence. The character of the home is determined by woman. Woman brings the pure atmosphere. She must guide to pure recreation that brings the joy of pure laughter. She must inspire to ^{en-}nobling

work with its uplifting purpose.

Women are selfish and unselfish. The selfish who seek their pleasure and their ease; who know no denial and no sacrifice; who give little thought and little labor for others--for aged parents or toiling husband and children, and still less thought and less labor for the thousands--strangers--that have not. The selfish do nothing, never did anything, and may be, never will. Thank God for the unselfish women of the world--who sacrifice their own pleasures to give increase of joy to their parents and husbands and children--who willingly make self-denial for the less fortunate! O, praise ~~her~~, the womanly heart full of tender sympathy! What would become of all the splendid work of the world, whose sunshine lightens the deep darkness of the world's misery, if all were thus selfish? Thank God for the souls kindled with religious fire, working for womanhood,--to help the unfortunate everywhere--to rescue the outcast! Thank God for the brave souls, who are fighting woman's battle for the honor of women. Woman must keep pure the altar fires of the home.

Men and women are appointed of God to do the work of the world. Our life and our thought and our work mean the advancement or the retrogression of our human race. Let woman do woman's work for women. If man be the prophet of justice, let woman be God's angel of mercy.