

NCTM. Thursday am. Class. 29th. July, 1993. G.C. Bingham

Third Term Course: Men and Women of the Bible

Study One: The Reality of The Woman

Introduction

Before we do character studies of men and women in the Bible, it will be good for us to look at what we might call 'the true woman' and 'the true man'. We will think of the 'the true woman' in this Study and although it will involve some mention of 'the true man' we will tackle that in our next Study.

The True Woman

(i) **Eve.** By 'true woman' we do not mean all women are not women, but 'true' is the same as when Jesus said, 'I am the true vine, meaning the archetypal vine, the fine from all vines get their meanings. A vine is not an analogy of Jesus but, at the best, an ectype of Him, the true Vine. So we have some explaining to do. Eve was the first created Woman. Before the fall she was a 'true woman', but after the fall not though not 'true' yet still a woman, albeit fallen. A creation of God, she was derived from Adam so that he said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man'. She was created to be Adam's 'helpmeet fit for him'. Later Adam named her again, 'Eve, because she was the mother of all living'. Like Adam she was a creature and as well derived from her we know something of her womanhood and motherhood.

At this point we should note there is no such thing as a 'race' of women. Man, created in the image of God, is both male and female, but never male apart from female, or female apart from male. Man is a male-female entity, a unity. We cannot properly think of male apart from female, or female apart from male. Together-and only together-they constitute 'Man'.

(ii) **God's Spouse, Israel.** In the Old Testament Israel is the wife of God. This can be seen in passages such as Jeremiah 3:1-3; Ezekiel chapters 16 and 23; Hosea 2:16ff.; Isaiah 54:4-8. Sadly enough these passages mainly show Israel as an unfaithful person. According to many Jewish exegetes the *Song of Solomon* was an allegory about Israel and God, as lovers. In the New Testament Sarah represents 'the Jerusalem above and she is our mother' whilst other parts of the New Testament depict the Church as the Bride of Christ. Ephesians 5:21-32 needs to be studied here. Of course Revelation 19 and 21 depict the Bride and the Bridegroom eschatologically. Revelation 12:1-6, 13-17 seems to depict spiritual Israel as the Mother of the Child who must be seen as Christ.

Whatever the failure of Israel as the true Woman, she does appear in Revelation 12 to have become this, and as the Bride of Christ to be the archetypal true woman. I am suggesting that the reading of my book *The Heavenly Vision* (NCPI, 1987) may help us to see something of the True Woman, especially pages 1-8 which are here attached. In extension of the theme see *God's Glory, Man's Sexuality* (N.C.P.1, 1988), pages 33-57).

The depiction in Proverbs 8:1-38 of Wisdom as a woman is surely tied in with the overall true understanding of womanhood, and is very beautiful. Likewise the Song of Solomon shows the personal beauty and simplicity-yet wisdom also-of the Shulamite woman. Proper womanhood is always depicted in glorious, and practical fashion. This latter is so in Proverbs 3 1:10-3 1.

2. MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

(iii) **The Eschatological, Teleological Woman.** In Ephesians 5:21-32 we see that the True Woman is the Bride of Christ. She is the archetypal Woman of whom women are ectypes. In Revelation 19 and 21 we see the Bride in all her beauty, and purity. She is glorified ('having the glory of God' 2 1:11). Doubtless she glorifies her Husband (cf. I Cor. 11:7), and we understand Woman only as we see her in her purity and in her union with her Husband. Thus only at the end of this time we will truly know the True Woman and the True Man, but we are shown enough of them, biblically and prophetically, to shape our own womanhood and manhood by them. We may note in passing that a human marriage is an ectype of the great archetype of the marriage of the Bride and the Lamb. Every marriage is a prophetic foretaste and type of the Marriage-to-come. We may also note that created Man and Woman were not complete, having not yet been glorified.

Women Compared

In Scripture there is always the evil woman. Generally she attempts to seduce godly persons. Proverbs 3 especially tells of her as a dangerous person. In Revelation 17-18 Babylon is the evil woman, the unholy City, 'the mother of harlots' — all opposites to the True Woman, the Wife of Yahweh, the Bride of Christ. In our studies we will see women who are women of faith, godly, and yet not perfect, as we will also see those who have fallen yet many raised to faith and godliness. When we come to study The True Man we will see some of these masculine equivalents.

The Point of our First Study

As we mentioned in our Term Commencement Letter our aim is to derive great personal benefit from seeing the characters of the people we study. We should learn by their failures, be encouraged by their growth, and warned against the kind of evils we can fall into as persons. To see what is 'woman' and to see what is 'man' and to comprehend what is 'Man' altogether can be very helpful for our understanding of life, and especially of the Triune God Who created us, redeemed us, and is presently sanctifying and glorifying us. The Studies, then, should be greatly useful.

MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER ONE

The prophet is visited with a dream, a vision, in which he sees the glory of the Woman, which he discovers to be the glory of Woman also. He understands from the vision that in the End-Time, the Time of Eternity, this Woman will represent the true people of the Human Race, and be the Citadel of Refuge and Healing for the Nations.

Then I saw in my dream—that dream within a dream—such beauty as I had never before, nor since, beheld. In such dreams and visions you do not analyse and classify, or even compare with some precedent. You are the object of the vision, not its subject. It comes upon you, because a vision is a gift, and you see with inward eyes, and when you see you know, although knowing does not mean you can express the truth of the vision in the way you can express non-visionary things.

When, then, I saw the glories which came in this dream. I knew nothing could equal such beauty, so rare was it. I can only make that claim and leave it to you who wish

to read and know the vision. It was the beauty of purity, or the purity of beauty: I cannot rightly say which, but both thoughts penetrated me in a strangely wonderful way, for true purity has never been known by the human race, except by some incredible grace. What the human race once knew in nature—its created reality—it has long since lost. So then I was deeply moved by that beauty and purity, and wished I would never cease to behold it. To tell the truth I have never ceased seeing it.

I was seeing a woman whose beauty can only be called glorious. She could not be called handsome or pretty, but simply glorious, for radiance shone forth from her, as though the inner splendour had become free and outwardly visible. It emanated from her, breaking out in shining rays which themselves kept compounding their brilliance, their own pure brilliance.

Her eyes were clear as crystal but of a colour that defied description. They shone as richly as any star, and had within them such regality that I was humbled even to look at them. I did not desire that she should see me, but that I should see her, and never cease seeing her. Her hair was a glory too, about her, flowing in long tresses that I would have called golden except that the brilliance seemed to absorb all colour.

Her arms also were regal, raised in utter joy, the slim fingers stretched and pointing to the heavens, the palms at ease and open, but when I looked to see the heavens to

which she was reaching, I saw that the heavens were about her. no less below her than above, and I knew in this dream and vision that she was a heavenly creature, albeit she was by nature a woman, and surely of our human race. That did not mystify me, for nothing in a dream mystifies, 'but often the meaning comes gradually to the dreamer, for understanding is never ultimately withheld from the willing beholder.

As I gazed in awe and delight upon the beauty of her, I found joy in purity which possessed me. It was as though I were in an invisible cocoon of sheer holiness, one felt and recognized rather than seen. I could behold her form without impurity of thought and desire. Oh yes, thought and desire were there, but peerless and impeccable, and the genuine mystery of love was beginning to break over me, and grasp me in its wonder.

I thought to myself, 'Her name is Love, and she is pure love,' but a Voice spoke to me and said, 'She is not Love, for He is Love, but she is "the Beloved," and love has made her what she is, pure in love, for His love has made her pure.' The thought then came to my mind that pure love always makes pure.

'Who, then,' I asked myself, 'is this Beloved, and Who is He Who is Love?' Yet I knew.

MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

I marvelled at the Voice, for it had the strange property of simplicity so that nothing which was said was not understood, and the history of the truth was also itself communicated. I knew then, that as there was Woman-the one I beheld-so, too, there was Man, and that he was the Voice, and I had a great longing to see him, but at that point he did not appear, and so I was content to look upon the beauty of the Woman.

I saw, as I looked, that she was arrayed in the most glorious of garments, and my heart told me simply that this Woman was to be wed, and that she was clothed in a garment that epitomized purity, a garment of light, but a garment that had not been made by human hands. I saw it to be soft and gentle linen, flowing about the form of the Woman as though it were alive, and almost an entity in itself, but an entity which worshipped and served the beauty of her femininity.

Then, suddenly, I wept. I wept for the knowledge that until this moment I had not known such purity. My own impurity-and impurities-of the past had been things to me of shame, and-if you will-secret shame. How many shames I had had, and how often! Yet this purity did not confront me. It did not accuse. It was there, but it seemed in the moment of my genuine yearning that I, too, entered into the purity of that Woman. Suddenly I lightened in my heart and my head and my spirit, and cascades of joy came tumbling out of me, and they seemed to go laughing on their way, and joy and pleasure such as I had not hitherto known possessed my whole being, and I understood much-if not all-of the joy and radiance of the Woman, and why she stood steeped in worship and wholly enriched by the devotion to the Man which he-for his part-had evoked by his love for her, and his love to her.

When this came upon me, then I suddenly understood the nature of the Woman, or, I might say, the nature of Woman, not just a woman, but Woman herself. I had always known something of femaleness, as I imagine every person knows-be that person man or woman-but because a man is a man he knows femininity from the point of view of his own masculinity, and woman knows it from the vantage point of her femininity, but there was a place here-in this vision-that all who watched could know the open secret of true femininity, for it was before the eyes in the beauty and the glory of this holy Bride. The whole of it soaked itself into me, and I was greatly amazed, for I certainly had not known this truth before.

What at first perturbed me, but later emancipated me, was the unmasking that took place within my understanding. I realized how much in error I had lived, and how wrongly I had thought, regarding the truth of femininity.

MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

Vivid ideas lost their brightness, and unholy ideas were dredged up and dispatched into a limbo of non-recall.

The loss of untruth does something wonderful for the human spirit, as even more does the inrush of pure truth. I was amazed and gratified at this new comprehension. The wonderful thing about this new knowledge was that I also understood masculinity in a way I had not seen it before. As yet I had not seen the Man, the Bridegroom, but I sensed this was to come, and that then I would know even more of true masculinity; so I bided my time, and greatly enjoyed the new insights that had come to me. Suddenly it seemed to me to be a wonderful thing to be a man, as also it was—for a woman—a wonderful thing to be a woman. I doubted whether any of our race had ever fully known the essential truth of femininity and masculinity, and I greatly longed that they should, for I felt that were we all to know, then we would glory in our humanity.

Then, as I looked, I knew this Bride had a marvellous history, but how I had come to know this history still remains a mystery to me. I can only say that since truth came flooding in, so did all the action of man's history. I knew in some way that Woman had been created with this purity which I now saw, but that this purity had been attacked by a beautiful, sinuous and sinister power, and the purity had become defiled, not only through subtle seduction, but through surrender to untruth, the acceptance and pursuit of the lie. Of that I wish to speak later, but the outcome of this pristine purity lay not in the deceit but in the restoration, for the Woman was to become the centre of the Divine Plan for all history.

I saw, then, in my dream, a City of splendour. It was a fair City, and its ramparts glowed warmly, as though the very stones of it were alive. Indeed the whole City seemed sentient and palpable. It appeared to throb with inner life, and that life showed itself in a gentle and strong glory. It was vibrant with the same purity that I had seen in the Woman, and I gazed with great joy. I seemed to see the City and the Woman as one, as though she were the City and it were her.

In my dream I walked around her, and the walking took many days, but the hours of those days were filled with an indescribable joy. The City seemed to fear no besieging, for its gates—high and noble as they were—remained open perpetually. I cannot say 'night and day', for there was no night there. All in that City was light and bright, for there was a pulsing glow that throbbed from its very heart.

At that time I did not enter the City, for it was not in my dream or vision to do so, though later it was so. What, however, I did see was a constant stream of people coming from East and West, from North and South, and often they were led by their monarchs, noble of face, regal in stature, and bringing with them the brilliance, gifts and treasures of their people. It seemed that all humanity—all true humanity—looked to this great City as the goal and home of the only creatures who were ever fashioned in the image of their Creator.

As I looked I knew the Woman and the City to be one. At that point there entered into my heart a yearning not only to look at the Woman, and at this great City, but to penetrate, understand, and know the mystery of both City and Woman.

Third Term Course: Men and Women of the Bible

Study Two: The Reality of The Man

Introduction

As we have looked at 'the True Woman' so now we look at 'the True Man'. The true Man was Adam before the Fall. At the end of history the 'True Man' will be Christ, the Son of God. We need now to trace the events of history which brings this about. A reading of Chapter Two of *The Heavenly Vision* (NCPI, 1987), pages 9-14 which are attached, should help to understand Man. In extension it would be good to read God's Glory, Man's Sexuality (NCPI, 1988) pages 29-57).

The True Man

(i) **Adam.** Adam as created, was the true man. 'Let us make man in our image and likeness,' God said, and this is what He did (Gen. 1:26f.; cf. 5:1-3; Psa. 8:3-8; 1 Cor. 11:7). We know that he was Man until Eve was taken from his side and formed into Woman, and that the male-female combination then represented Man. To this union a command was given (Gen. 1:28f.). So the male was incomplete without the female and the female without the male. True Man then is the man-woman entity and unity, and they have no point in being created apart from the function of the mandate. In Eden their perfection was seen and exercised. At the fall Adam ceased to be the 'true man' and became 'fallen man', although he was still a man. Likewise Eve's fall indicated that together they were not longer the 'true Man'. The true man-woman entity can only be true and full when Man is fully one with God.

(ii) **Covenantal Man.** Israel was known as 'the son of God' in the sense that he was my first-born son' and 'my son' (Exod. 4:22-23). All Israelites were known as 'sons of God' (Deut. 14:1-2). This did not mean Covenantal Man was better than 'fallen Man' but it did mean that he lived in the presence of God through covenant, and was therefore a persons-and people-under grace, having the truths (or, oracles) of God as against the other nations who worshipped idols and were 'the sons of-idols'.

(iii) **Christ, the True Man.** That Christ was truly human is biblically undeniable. He was sent by God (Gal. 4:4), was born of a woman, born under the law, in the *likeness* of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3) though not in sinful flesh. Becoming man (John 1: 14; Heb. 2:14; Phil. 2:8) he is the True Man. Not only without sin, but doing the will of the Father he was thus True Man and we can call him the paradigm of true humanity. All we need to know regarding a human being we can discover from him.

(iv) **Eschatological, Teleological Man.** To know what Man was as created is difficult for us, that is, what paradisaic Man was, without guilt, fear of death-and so on. The closest we can come to sensing this unfallen Man is when we are justified, that is, without guilt, but since we live not in Eden but a fallen world it is impossible to fully understand Man as originally created, and even how he lived in an unfallen world and by this we mean the creation with the curse upon it. Christ the Man is the closest

we can come to knowing True Man, but then Christ died, rose and was glorified. From I John 3:13; Phil. 3:21; Romans 8:18-25, 30 we know we will be glorified, and glorified in the image of His Son, but we do not yet know what this will be. We certainly can imagine much, and we have the help of the Book of the Revelation to show us much concerning him in his risen, glorified state, seated and reigning at the right hand of God. The last few chapters of this Book show him as the Bridegroom, and the Lamb seated with the Father on His throne.

In any case we know enough of what we will be, to know how we can be now, and how we should be, by the grace and power of God. Thus when we look at the various men and women we are about to present to ourselves from the Bible we can be helped in understanding them in the light of what it means to be human, and to be human in the Triune God, and by the aid of the Persons of that Godhead.

MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER TWO

As the seer longs to know the mystery of the City and the Woman, he is taken back in time to witness the beginning of the Woman, and to behold, also, the Man.

It may have been because of my desire that I was transported in my vision to the Beginning-Time when the preparations for the mystery of the Woman and the City had been planned. I do not know, but I was suddenly aware that the future had receded from me, and I was in the beginning of the Past. It was a situation of absolute quietness until the Commands issued from the Voice.

I saw in my dream that the heavens and the earth were taking their beginning. Monumental things were happening, such as the movements of great masses of water, and the appearing of vast areas of dry land. Through it all I heard the Voice, and the Voice uttered Commands, so that as the Word went out, what appeared to be chaos and disorder began to take form, showing order.

While this was all happening, I saw and heard celestial creatures of great beauty and dignity. These were so amazed and entranced with the things that were happening that they could not contain themselves for the wonder of what they were witnessing, and suddenly these sons of God shouted for joy! Their thunderous applause seemed almost to rend the heavens and the earth, and their delight was so infectious that I knew all the creation to be a thing of joy, and nothing whatever to be dreaded, even though to me the mighty movements of land and sea were in themselves awesome, and productive of a holy reverent fear of the Voice and His Commands. As I watched, wonderstruck, I saw green things grow and appear, colour emerge and flourish, creatures small and large sporting themselves with utter freedom on land, in the sea and in the air. All the time the shouting choir of celestials spoke the joy of all things. All things seemed to admire all things, and their humility in worship of the Voice was something rich to behold. Then, when I thought all things were complete, came the creation of Man.

My heart was strangely moved as I gazed upon this event. Man, it seemed, was to be the very essence of all things. His substance was drawn from the earth, but his pure life from the very Breath of God. In a moment of creation he became a living being. Within his being was amassed all that makes him the noblest of living creatures—nobler, even, than the celestials themselves. None of them was made in God's likeness; none of them was in His image. Part of me trembled with fear, and part with joy, that God should create Man as a creature, yet design him to have fellowship with Himself.

What came to me, as I gazed upon Man, was that he was most regal. His nobility was that of one given the highest destiny in history.

The Voice spoke and told him to fill up the earth with his kind, to subdue those powerful elements which needed true control and leadership, and at the same time to exercise wise and warm stewardship of all creation. I was breathless with joy and gratitude that humanity had been given so high and lofty a calling.

I saw then, in this vision, that Man sported amongst all the creatures of God. They seemed to delight in him, and he in them; in fact all things seemed to be in concert. Their awe of him contained no dread, and his concern for them no domination. It seemed their very characters comported with his naming of them, so quick he was to discover what they were, and what they were about. In all this my wonder never diminished. I understood wholly what it is to worship Him Who is the Voice and Who created all things. I knew what it was to worship Him with all creation.

Even so, my wonder turned to amazement and then to enraptured astonishment when I saw the creation of Woman. It may well be that she was there, in the depths of the Man, and that the Holy Creator drew her out of his inner being, but suddenly she was there, and my heart and bones ached with the beauty and splendour that I beheld. The joy and the delight of the Man was no less, and he uttered words that sounded like echoes of the Creator Himself, so noble they were, for he said, *'She is flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone.'*

Then he called her 'Woman!', that is, 'She is out of man!'

I knew then, with a deep sweet ache in my heart, that the total union of Man and Woman must arise from their total union with Him Who is the Voice. To be one with each other they must first be one with God. Then their union would be one of indescribable fulfilment, of utter oneness, and the richest of all human experience. For one human to have entire oneness with another seemed to me to be unbelievable, yet 'flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone' could mean no less than that. Such union must mean a human being would know no aloneness, and also no loneliness. The joy of such union would spread through all of life, giving it pure meaning and rich living.

So I knew to my never forgetting that the Man and the Woman are one, one humanity which is neither male nor female as such, but male-female in the one. This is the true humanity. I trembled with the simplicity and the beauty of this understanding which had not previously come to me, but now came through the vision I was beholding. In a flash-so to speak-my understanding was changed. Now it was one with my understanding of the Woman I had seen at the End-time, and in the situation of the Holy City. I knew all that was male was one with all that was female, and that this was to be for always. To divide these into two streams, even streams that flowed in parallel, would be to do despite to the true unity of the human race in its inseparable male-femaleness.

I watched the Two who were as One sporting themselves within the rich garden, the earthly paradise which was theirs. Every tree was good for food and pleasant to the eyes. No shadow of guilt lay across the life of the Man and the Woman. Fear and dread were wholly absent. Innocence was present in its gentleness, wisdom and power. Colour, movement, emotion and affection-all combined to show unsullied love. Tears of joy started from my eyes as I watched the truth of love between Man and Woman, the unity of purity, and the nature of the image of God as it lived itself in true life. I knew that I really understood the nature of Man, of the truth of Man's masculinity and Woman's femininity. I understood with this the utter oneness, the fusion and union of the two, in the physical consummation.

What came to me with that understanding was that the human race, as a whole, ought

to know the dynamic reality and the powerful truth of that union -that utter oneness. This would be the joy that would make the human race to have wholesome unity, i.e. of husband and wife, parents and children, children and children, neighbour and neighbour. This marital love would be the foundation of all true human relationships. I saw too that this utter oneness, expressed by that Primal Couple in marital union, must be the basis of the wider union of all that is male and all that is female across the whole human race. As I understood that creational union of Man and Woman-they constituting the one glorious race-then my joy, again, knew no bounds.

Then in that very moment, as my joy was so full, I saw the darkening of all things, the vast shadows that began to loom across the race of Mankind. Light seemed to be there, as it had come in creation, but the presence of evil in the form of beauty was about to invade the paradise of Man.

MEN AND WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

NCTM. Thursday a.m. Class. 12th August, 1993. G.C. Bingham

Third Term Course: Men and Women of the Bible

Study Three: The Woman and the Fountain

Introduction to John 4:1-45

A Contrast of Two Women

When we look at the reality of the Woman who was the spouse of God, the one who brought forth the seed, the Child, and the one who is the Bride of Christ, then we see Woman in all her purity, beauty and service. What a contrast to this one who comes from a Samaritan village to draw water.

- (i) She comes when other women do not draw water.
- (ii) She has had five husbands, and is now living with a man.
- (iii) She is a person who has tried everything in life, without lasting success. Her source of life—marriage—has nothing more to offer.
- (iv) She goes out into the day, hopeless. Her spirit is dried up. See Proverbs 25:26; cf. 4:23. All humanity has a spring. Cf. Jeremiah 2:13; Psalm 87:7.

Two Men Who are the One

The one who is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world and the Bridegroom-to come, meets this woman.

- (i) He is truly weary and thirsty as is any human being (cf. Heb. 2:17; Heb. 4:15-5:2).
- (ii) He needs human help to drink, but is the fountain of the water of life.
- (iii) He approaches the woman where she is, seeking her help.
- (iv) He points to the gift of God to be given via Messiah (cf. 4:26), (a) the gift of life (4:10), (b) the life that is a perpetual fountain (4:14; cf. 6:36; 7:37-39), (c) the gift of the Spirit (4:14; 4:23), (d) total forgiveness in renewal (4:18, 39, 42), (d) true worship as a child of God in and by the Spirit (4:20-25). NB. 'The prodigal daughter'.
- (v) Although it is not explicitly stated it cost him the Cross to forgive the woman (cf. Matt. 1:21; 9:6; 26:28; John 1:29).

The Woman Being a Fountain

Receiving the gift, believing, she is a changed woman, and now witnesses to her people by

- (a) telling them who he was and what he had done, (b) by claiming that he was the Saviour of the world. Purified, she could not but be a true woman—a woman under grace. Her past was cleansed, a fountain was springing up in her. She knew she was a daughter of the Father, and could worship Him now by the Spirit he had given her, and from the life which had come to her. By her life of witness she was showing what it was/is to be a true woman, a woman in Christ and the Father.