Reforms

Women

**Piety**

And here, it seems to me is indicated the most important duty of the Christian wife. From natural temperament, and the circumstances of her daily life, she is more sensitive than her husband to the appeals of religion, and less exposed to the dangers and temptations of the world. While, then, it should be her endeavor to render the home of her husband a place of rest from the toils of business–of comforts amid the disappointments of life–of cheerful recreation amid its cares–it should be especially her effort to make it the residence of purity and piety. Against anger, clamor, wrath, bitterness, evil-speaking, murmurs discontent, reproaches, and complainings, the door should be effectually shut; while for meekness gentleness, resignation, forbearance, hope, peace and joy, there should be an abundant entrance, and a perpetual welcome! – Reverend Aldert Smedes, Sermon on the Duties of a Christian Woman (1851)

**Purity**

“the man bears rule over his wife’s person and conduct. She bears rule over his inclinations: he governs by law; she by persuasion… The empire of women is the empire of softness, her commands are caresses, her menaces are tears.” – Matrimony (1839)

**Submissiveness**

“She feels herself weak and timid. She needs a protector. She is in a measure dependent. She asks for wisdom, constancy, firmness, perseveredness, and she is willing to repay it all by the surrender of the full treasure of her affection. Women despise in men everything like themselves except a tender heart. It is enough that she is effeminate and weak; she does not want another like herself.”

-George Burnap, The Sphere and Duties of Woman.

**Domesticity**

“There is more to be learned about pouring out tea and coffee than most young ladies are willing to believe.” – *Godey’s Ladies Book*

Angela and Sarah Grimke

*Letter on the Condition of Women and the Equality of the Sexes* - Sarah Grimke, 1837

“men and women were CREATED EQUAL.... Whatever is right for a man to do, is right for woman....I seek no favors for my sex. I surrender not our claim to equality. All I ask of our brethren is, that they will

take their feet from off our necks and permit us to stand upright on that ground which God destined us to.”

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

“The general discontent I felt with woman's portion as wife, housekeeper, physician, and spiritual guide, the chaotic conditions into which everything fell without her constant supervision, and the wearied, anxious look of the majority of women, impressed me with a strong feeling that some active measures should be taken to remedy the wrongs of society in general, and of women in particular. My experience at the World Anti-slavery Convention, all I had read of the legal status of women, and the oppression I saw

everywhere, together swept across my soul, intensified now by many personal experiences. It seemed as if all the elements had conspired to impel me to some onward step. I could not see what to do or where to begin—my only thought was a public meeting for protest and discussion.”

**Seneca Falls Declaration**

“We hold these truth to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal…”

“…establishment of an absolute tyranny over her.”

“He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise…thereby

leaving her without representation…he has oppressed her on all sides.”

“He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men –

both natives and foreigners.”

“He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.”

“He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.”

“He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with

impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband…compelled to promise

obedience…he becoming to all intents and purposes, her master…”

“He has monopolized nearly all profitable employments…[as] a teacher of theology, medicine,

or law, she is not known.”

“He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education…”

“He allows her in Church, as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic

authority for her exclusion from the ministry…”

“He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for

men and women…”

“Resolved, That the speedy success of our cause upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both

men and women, for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to

women an equal participation with men in various trades, professions, and commerce.”

“Resolved, therefore, That, being invested by the Creator with the same capabilities, and the

same consciousness of responsibility for their exercise, it is demonstrably the right and duty of

woman, equally with man, to promote every righteous cause by every righteous means…”

Resolved, that it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves

their sacred right to the elective franchise.