

# COURSE OF SOCIAL RIGHT FOR WOMEN

FIRST INSTALLMENT.

PRELIMINARY.

The convulsions that agitate our old civilization announce the advent of a new era, the transformation of all our social institutions and the regeneration of the human race.

All the principles of eternal truth contained in the teachings of the religions of the past were developed by the initiators of social science, and are summed up in these three divine principles, which were proclaimed by our glorious revolution:

Fraternity, which makes us united all for each, each for all;

Equality, which gives us all the same rights and imposes on us the same duties;

Liberty, which inspires everyone to respect human dignity and guarantees the rights of each and all.

The time has come to usher in the reign of God on earth.

The law of humanity must be based on the law of God.

## SOCIAL DESTINY OF HUMANITY BASED ON DIVINE LAW.

God is, he reveals himself by his works. God is the creator of the universe and the father of all intelligent beings.

He created the human being in his image. He created it male and female; he animated it with divine breath, and from the two halves of the same being he formed the social individual, man and woman, to love each other, complete each other and walk together towards the same goal. He founded human society.

God created loving, active and intelligent beings, because he is love, power and intelligence.

He created them to love, to labor and to know, that is to say, to be happy; not to be selfish, idle and ignorant, that is to say doomed to misfortune.

All of the children of God are brothers, equal and free.

They are brothers, because they have the same origin; they are all united, all for each, each for all; no one should say like Cain: *Am I my brother's keeper?*

They are equal, because they have the same right to happiness and, from this right, there results the same duty for each, that of contributing with all the power of their faculties, individually and collectively, to the happiness of all.

They are free; God, by creating them in his image, gave them free will: it is their participation in this divine faculty that gives moral value to their actions.

They have deviated from the providential path; but God created them to be happy, and, in his infinite foresight, he gave them the means to triumph over selfishness, the sole source of all human miseries.

Evil entered the world through selfishness: one half of humanity wanted to dominate the other, one half of humanity was oppressed, and the principles of love and devotion, of order and of peace, were subordinated; discord, disorder and violence reign on the earth, and will only cease to reign there when men understand that all the laws that they have established alone are incomplete and in opposition to the law of God.

The history of the human race reveals to us from the origin the cause of our suffering and shows us the way to remedy it.

Brutal force reigns at the beginning of all societies: the warrior and hunter treats as a slave his companion who devotes herself to the care of the family and to industrial labors, and already industry, useful labor, is subordinated; the force that must assist it, serve as its instrument, protects it by enslaving it; the natural order is overturned, union no longer exists, and suffering enters life. It precedes the struggle, force triumphs, injustice reigns, and the exploitation of man by man begins.

When, through the right of war, the strongest have conquered power and wealth, they reduce the vanquished into slavery and make themselves served by those they have despoiled.

But already, without understanding it, man is suffering the effects of universal solidarity, this holy law that links all members of society in harmony and which strikes them in disorder.

The victors of today will be defeated tomorrow and robbed by the right of the strongest; their children, reduced to slavery, will in turn be victims of this iniquitous right on which their fathers relied.

But soon they will no longer bloody the furrows of the peaceful plowman to compete for only a little land, a few herds and slaves: a wider field opens up to their ambition.

God has created the perfectible human being. He put in him an ardent aspiration towards happiness, and the intelligence, which develops slowly in the midst of this chaos of suffering and violent and gross passions, nevertheless comes to project a few rays of pure light on the desolate earth by its savage inhabitants; prophets, poets and legislators sent and inspired by God, according to the need of the times and places, come to enlighten the world with the first glimmers of the great universal religion that must one day unite all beings under the laws of divine harmony. They give the human race the first notions of industry, arts and sciences. Soon flourishing cities arise on all sides; laws, which seem imbued with great wisdom, direct the societies that are formed under their aegis; powerful empires are founded. But these flourishing cities, these powerful empires will one day collapse before this devastating torrent, war; barely any vestiges of their debris will

remain to indicate the place where they would have been. All these societies, so proud of their fabulous origin, of their institutions established by the demigods and heroes of antiquity, will be dispersed by the invasion of the barbarians or by civil discord like the sands of the desert by an impetuous wind., or they will be destroyed by the corruption of morals and will fall into slavery.

Why? It is because these laws, these institutions, which seemed to ensure the glory and prosperity of peoples, were incomplete, like the revelations on which they were based.

They were incomplete because man alone spoke, and he alone cannot understand what is necessary for the happiness and longevity of societies and the complete development of all the moral, physical and intellectual faculties of the human being.

Humanity advances; it grows in time and space, and yet woman, still a slave, remains veiled and in silence; she has lost the memory of her divine origin, she cannot understand her high social mission, she has no name, no homeland, she is banished from the sanctuary, and she seems to have accepted her shameful servitude. Bent under the yoke of man, the aspiration towards liberty is no longer even in her; it is man who must free her!

But a new light spreads over the world, the man-God comes to pronounce this word of liberation, this holy word that contains the germ of the salvation of the human race; but how many hear it without understanding it?

However, a large number of generous women bless the name of the divine master; they prove that they were worthy of liberty, they celebrate their advent to social life by sharing with their brothers the glory of martyrdom, they want to seal with their blood this new faith that allows them to take part in the glorious struggle of devotion and intelligence against the blind selfishness of the old world.

More than eighteen centuries have passed, and this struggle has continued even within Christian society, where, under a hypocritical mask, the still living remains of paganism and the errors of asceticism fight without ceasing against the word of truth.

Christianity is still misunderstood. Why? Because man, forgetting the word of the Redeemer, who called woman to take part in his sublime teachings, man alone spoke to explain what he could not understand alone.

The violent convulsions that have, for more than half a century, shaken the societies of our old Europe to their foundations, clearly indicate that political reforms will be insufficient to give the world peace and happiness.

A great social reform is necessary, inevitable; but this reform, to be complete, lasting, cannot come from man alone.

Man only knows how to establish order through despotism; woman only knows how to organize by the power of her mother's love; both united will know how to reconcile order and liberty.

How many constitutions, aborted from their birth, followed one another at the time of our first Revolution, how many more will succeed one another in vain if man, led astray by blind selfishness, still wants to walk alone, contrary to the law of God! For thus says the Scripture:

“The Lord God also said: It is not good for a man to be alone; let us make him a helper like him.”

Love, union, harmony, who better than woman can make these divine words vibrate in the heart of man? Who better to make him understand his power and help him close the abyss of revolutions forever? O woman! Mother of the human race, you who sums up in every breast all its sorrows, you who have suffered all the martyrdoms, you the sacred type of the worker always suffering, always oppressed, always subordinated, rise up and speak in the name of humanity! God himself commands it: it is more than a right, it is a duty.

JEANNE DEROIN, 1848.

Working translation by Shawn P. Wilbur (last revised June 6, 2024)