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THE WAY TO PEACE.

The Christian Union of Aug. 20, under the head of "The Sunday School" (Lesson, Col. III., 16-25,) has the following. "(1.) Because wives are exhorted to submit themselves to their husbands, it does not follow that their husbands are superior. But that in all relations there must be one head—a two-headed creature is always a monstrosity. In the household there must be one head—namely, the husband. A private soldier may know more than his colonel, but he must submit to his colonel so long as he is a private. The wife may be wiser than her husband, but, if so, she will submit herself to him rather than have strife with him. Almost any error will bring less suffering upon a household, and less evil upon the children, than perpetual conflict between husband and wife and no possible arbiter to decide between them." It is enough to make the blood of any intelligent, self-respecting woman boil with indignation to see such atrocious sentiments as the above, sincerely put forth by a leading religious weekly, which claims to be progressive and to favor justice and equal rights.

Here was an opportunity to say that whatever teaching ignorant Greek women might have required eighteen centuries ago, no such exhortation applied to the American wife of to-day. Instead of this it is coolly assumed that the principle of abject and unquestioned submission of the wife to the husband, is of universal application in all ages, and under all circumstances; that it is right, expedient, and indeed necessary.

It is coolly assumed that unless the wife always submits in all things to the will of the husband, she will "have strife with him"; in other words, that he will invariably insist upon his rightful prerogative to rule, and she will have no alternative but submission, for the sake of peace, and the good of the children.

Abject submission is not the way to an honorable peace. The order which reigned in Warsaw, is not the order we want in family life. The only true harmony is the harmony of equality; the harmony to be obtained by a recognition of mutual rights and duties. Absolute authority on the one hand and unquestioning submission on the other, is the worst possible example to set before children. Children who see their mother habitually ruled by their father, and never venturing to have a will of her own, lose respect for her, and will not submit to her control. Her sons despise her and take the earliest opportunity, on the approach of manhood to assume over her the same air of superiority they have seen their father indulge; to which she, her will and judgment weakened by disuse, easily succumbs.

The children also attempt to tyrannize over each other as they see their father tyrannize over their mother. If the parents cannot work together in harmony, unless one is constantly subject to the other, how can the children play together on any other terms? If the man should be "head" in the family, it is but appropriate that the brothers should assume the dictatorship over their sisters; and when their time comes to marry they will enter the relation with the same idea that it is their prerogative to rule and the wife's duty to submit, which they have seen illustrated at home. The effect of this principle upon the characters of both husbands and wives is pernicious in the extreme.

The husband becomes selfish, tyrannical and arbitrary; the wife is dwarfed in judgment, will, and self-respect, or becomes deceitful and hypocritical, if she does not, as a strong, healthy nature would, break out in open rebellion against such flagrant and cruel injustice. To compare family discipline to that of an army is absurd. It is more like a business partnership. Do we ever hear that in such a partnership it is necessary for one of the partners to be the absolute "head" of the other, who must always submit for the good of the firm?

Are articles of co-partnership usually drawn with specifications to the effect that one of the partners named shall always rule and the other always submit? Or, in default of written agreements, is there any law or custom to that effect? If so, I have yet to learn it.

It would be more to the purpose for a Christian periodical of the present age and nation to exhort husbands to recognize the equal rights of wives and to defer to their wishes and judgment in matters pertaining peculiarly to their "sphere," for the sake of avoiding "strife," and of setting a good example to the children, than to encourage them to tyranny and injustice by exhorting wives to yield to them for the sake of peace, no matter how unreasonable they may be.

The wise woman will not always "submit." She will have, if necessary, a contest, short, sharp, and decisive, which shall be followed by a peace based on equality, rather than live a life of degrading and humiliating submission in that home of which she is called "queen." In the family partnership the division of labor is usually so clearly defined that there can be little question as to which should decide a given point, where it is necessary that one should decide. Clearly in the husband's business, he must be the final arbiter; and in the wife's business, as keeper of home and trainer of children, she should decide all doubtful questions. Liberty, justice and equality are as sweet to woman as to man, and as necessary both to her highest good and his.

Lavinia Goodell. Janesville, Wis., Sept. 4, 1879.