

The Vision Chronicles

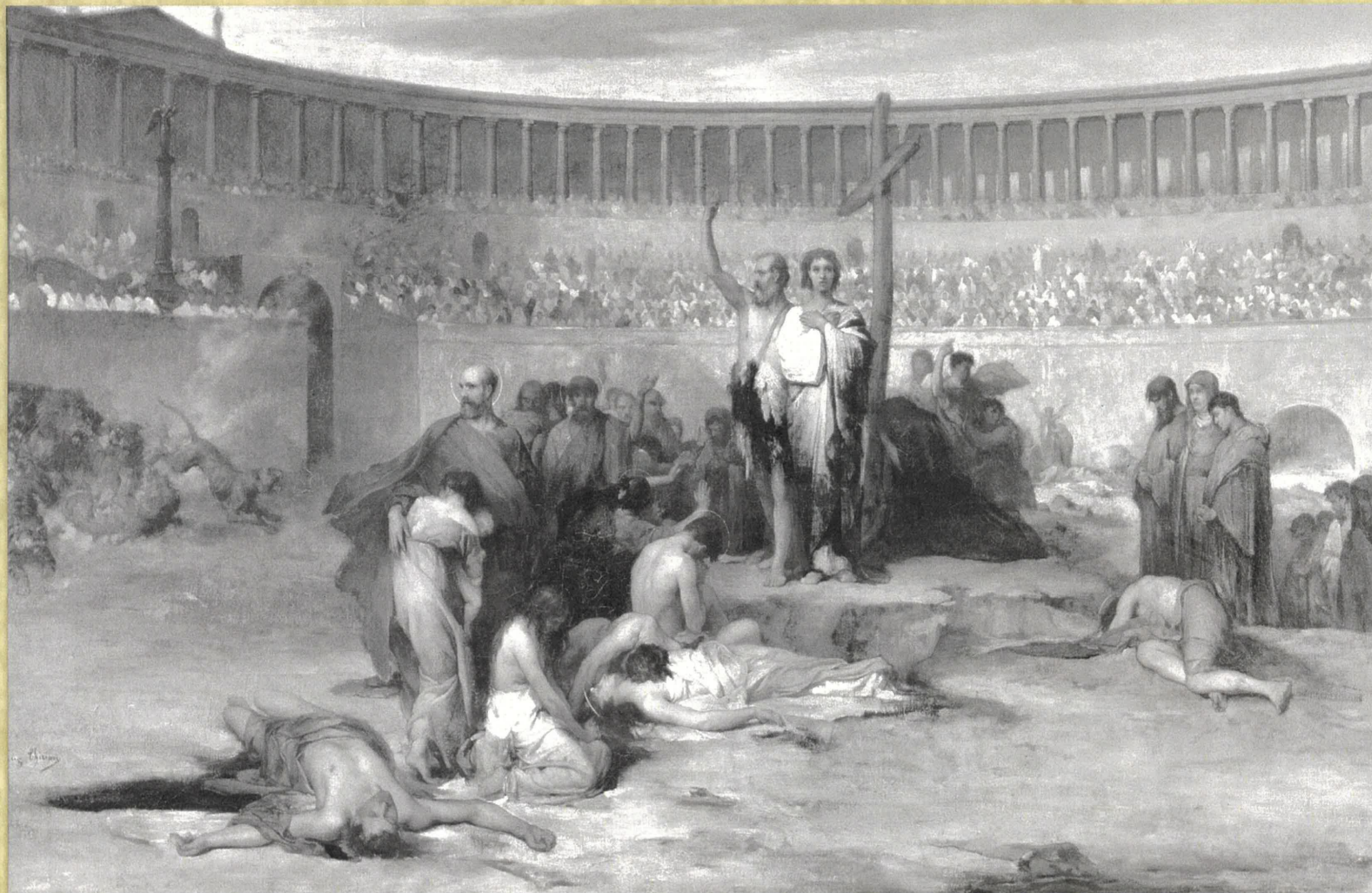
Restoring history...one story at a time

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Proverbs 29:10

Heroic Women -Wielding "Weapons" of Modesty

Mocked for modesty...scorned for virtues...



Admired by their Enemies...the Backbone of a Nation.

Summary from the Last Narrative...

American history is richly interwoven with stories of Christian heroism among women—accounts that do not merely decorate our past but shape its very core. Again and again, it was the Christian faith, courage, and conviction of such women that held families together, inspired their husbands to lead, and sustained entire communities through trial and uncertainty. Their influence was so undeniable that even the enemies of the colonies—those who sought to break the resolve of the settlers—were forced to admit the ingenuity, endurance, and unwavering faithfulness of the women they encountered, women who believed in the efficacy of prayer and faith as a basis for courage and discerned achievement. In the solitude of their families, in the cool silence of the forest, and in the presence of their foes, Christian women knelt down and prayed for peace, for victory, for rescue from danger, and for deliverance from the enemies that beset them...and they acted upon their convictions!

Their influence shaped not only the development of the American West, but also deeply molded the character of the men beside them. One of the enduring truths of the Christian faith is the sanctifying power of a godly wife. Time and again, history—and Scripture—bear witness: a man's greatness often rises in direct proportion to the strength, faith, and grace of the woman who walks faithfully at his side.

These frontier wives - and the daughters they raised - were not fragile ornaments. They were spiritual warriors in aprons and calico, raising sons who would one day shape a nation and husbands who would lead with renewed strength and conviction.

So then—what is the role of a good woman?

Early America did not approach this question with mere sentiment or idle speculation. It answered with conviction—by turning to the same theology that had given birth to the colonies themselves. The vision for womanhood was not a passing ideal but a carefully wrought tapestry, woven from the living threads of key doctrines.

According to the records of both friend and foe, it was the resolute Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, the disciplined Dutch Reformed, the steadfast Puritans of New England, and the courageous Huguenots of France who knit our young nation together with strong Biblical precepts. Their faith was not ornamental—it was formative. These settlers carried with them a theology that shaped homes, schools, and governments alike.

This is not to suggest that other branches of Christendom stood idle. Yet even their testimonies affirm that the doctrines championed by such an ancestry forged an extraordinary understanding of righteousness coupled with a depth of proficiency which

spread across the colonies. This aptitude was adopted in whole or in part by nearly all who sought to build a life upon these shores.[1]

One can see that Christianity had so deeply permeated every sect that its influence became the unseen current beneath all of American life. As the renowned historian Alexis de Tocqueville observed, the vast majority of people professed Christian ethics not out of mere habit or conformity, but because they could scarcely conceive of a society existing apart from such divine precepts. Again d'Tocqueville marveled at the genius and pervasive respect toward what he observed on the American cultural landscape of 1840: "Therefore Christianity reigns without obstacles by universal consent." [2]

Their worldview exalted biblical literacy, upright ethical responsibility, and a charitable concern for those unable to defend themselves. Most importantly—and perhaps uniquely—it was their understanding of "covenant" that matured the institutions of both marriage and family, and that same principle would later give rise to the genius of the Constitution and the civil liberties that flourished throughout the colonies.

From the pulpit, their ministers thundered with conviction, shaping not only the hearts but the

[1] Alexis d'Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. I, Chapter 2 "Concerning their point of departure and its importance for the future of the Anglo-Americans", J.P. Mayer (ed), George Lawrence (transl)

[2] Alexis d'Tocqueville was a visitor from France who travelled extensively throughout America in order to discover the glory of what made America great. He wrote that the real cultural strength of America was in her churches.

What is the role of a good Woman? (Con't)

intellects of both men and women. It is no wonder the British derisively called the War for Independence "The Presbyterian Revolt."

Many historians—some even begrudgingly, through the lens of modern skepticism—acknowledge that the genius of America's constitutionalism and view of civil liberty produced a rare maturity in the colonial population.[3]

In Europe, class and custom confined wisdom to the few; in America, it was found in the many. There, in a blacksmith's shop or a carpenter's yard, at a merchant's stall or in a maiden's parlor, one might encounter political insight, commercial understanding, and theological depth—all residing in the same person.[4] Such a people did not accidentally produce their Patrick Henrys, their George Washingtons, their Benjamin Franklins, or their John Winthrops.

And though history's spotlight has often passed them by, the women of that age—taught beneath those same thundering pulpits—wielded an influence that quietly shaped the moral will of the colonies. As Tocqueville so pointedly noted, the spirit of liberty that stirred in America was no spontaneous outburst; it was cultivated in the soil of Christian theology, watered by faith, and tended by conviction until it bore the fruit of freedom.[5]

Even Alexis d'Tocqueville—the keen French observer so captivated by America's moral landscape—recognized that every colony, north to south, turned instinctively to New England's Puritans for guidance in the earnest questions of freedom, education, representative government, trade, and economic order. Their influence, born of key doctrines of faith matured and woven into their way of life, became the blueprint for a society unlike any other.

No serious historian today disputes the profound imprint left by the Huguenots, the Dutch, and the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians upon the formation of America's most sacred documents. Thomas Jefferson borrowed freely from their writings; Benjamin Franklin, ever the practical philosopher, quoted freely from the great preachers—men like George Whitefield, Samuel Davies, and Jonathan Edwards—whose sermons stirred the hearts of an entire generation of people.

There was no question of the propriety of citing ministers of the gospel on the most influential issues such as constitutionalism, law, cultural norms, and civic duty. Indeed, clergymen were frequently summoned as advisers in matters of state, their discernment valued as a moral compass in the proper shaping of a nation.

Yet beyond the pulpit and the council chamber, another influence moved quietly but no less powerfully—the voices of the women whose wisdom guided their homes and communities. Letters, diaries, and family records of the era are replete with the counsels of mature matrons who corresponded earnestly with their husbands, sons, and friends—women whose insight and conviction sustained the moral life of a nation in its making.[6]

Abigail Adams often wrote to her husband, the Founding Father John Adams, on matters of virtue, governance, and moral duty. Modern feminists, largely unaware of the theological soil from which her convictions sprang, often recast her as an early emblem of feminism. Yet this perspective overlooks the spiritual framework that shaped the understanding of marriage—namely, the concept of "covenant" in the Christian theology of their day.

To the Founders, the *covenant* was not a mere religious abstraction; it was the living bond that joined God to His people, and by reflection, husbands to wives, citizens to their communities, and rulers to the governed.



"See how they love one another." -Tertullian 202AD

It was this covenantal vision that gave rise to duty, restraint, and liberty in equal measure.

The woman of Proverbs 31, so often cited by the Founders, embodied this harmony. She was celebrated not for rebellion or ambition, but for wisdom[7], charity[8], humility[9], and steadfast virtue[10]—qualities esteemed by her husband, her son Solomon, and by the magistrates of Israel[11] alike. In her, they saw the epitome of the Christian woman: dignified, industrious, and profoundly influential, not through defiance, but through divine strength expressed in service.

During the French and Indian War, a sermon by the renowned colonial minister **Samuel Davies**, drawn from the book of *Jeremiah* and titled "*On Cowardice*," swept through the colonies like wildfire. Its words kindled hearts and stiffened spines. Enlistments surged in its wake, and with them rose the morale and resolve of the young men and women of the colonies. Many would later say that the tide of the war itself had turned—not merely by strategy or strength—but by the rekindling of courage rooted not in the absence of fear, but in the presence of faith.

The nineteenth-century historian **William Fowler** recorded countless examples of the frontier women of that era—the mothers and wives of the Founders—whose steadfast faith and moral clarity shaped the very character of the men they loved. It was in their homes, and around their humble hearths, that valor was first taught—kindled by the flame of moral fortitude they so carefully tended in the hearts of their sons. With that same quiet strength, they sanctified their husbands, fortifying them with a courage as steady as it was unyielding. In the hidden labor of such women, the spiritual backbone of a people was forged—and with it, the soul of a nation.[12]

Virtue Transformed the World

In contrast to this noble portrait, let us turn our gaze to a very different scene—to the first century of imperial Rome, where the satirist **Juvenal**, in his biting work "*A Diatribe Against the Women of Rome*," painted an image not of virtue, but of vanity, corruption, and moral decay in the women of his day:

Now tell me- if thou canst now love a wife, made thine by every tie and thine for life, why wed at all? Why waste the wine and the cakes, the queasy-stomached guest, at parting, takes? ...if thou canst love and thy besotted mind is so uxoriously to one inclined, then bow thy neck, and with submissive air, receive the yoke thou must forever wear.

To a fond spouse, a wife no mercy shows but warmed with equal fires, enjoys his woes. She

tells thee where to love and where to hate. Shouts out the ancient friend, whose beard thy gate new from its downy to its hoary state: and when rogues and parasites of all degrees have power to will their fortune as they please, she dictates thine, and impudently dares to name thy very rivals for thy heirs. Thus the virago triumphs, thus she reigns...husband on husband takes till of her bridal veil one rent she makes. While thy wife's mother lives, expect no peace. She teaches her with savage joy to fleece a bankrupt spouse; kind creature! ...[13]

The contrast between the unconverted women of the Roman Empire and the Christian women of that same era was so striking that it compelled the great church apologist **Tertullian** to condemn the former in terms as fiery as they were infamous. In his severe rebuke, he declared, "*You are the doorway of the devil*," exposing the spiritual corruption that had come to define Rome's moral decline and the radiant purity that marked the followers of Christ in that age of darkness.

The Roman feminist elite's hatred for Christian women was so intense that they pressured the authorities to hunt them down, strip them naked in the arenas and subject them to brutal torment at the jaws of wild beasts, to fire, and to public shame. Christian women were mocked for their modesty, ridiculed in public forums and the marketplace, and scorned for virtues that ran counter to Roman decadence. Yet, in the face of cruelty and derision, they endured—and in their endurance, they triumphed. Their courage and steadfast virtue did more than survive the spectacle of persecution; it captivated the hearts of the populace, gradually transforming the morality of a society enthralled with wickedness.

Again, a stark contrast for us to quietly envision from Tertullian:

How beautiful then the marriage of two Christians, two who are one in hope, one in desire, one in the way of life they follow, one in the religion they practice. They are as brother and sister, both servants of the same Master. Nothing divides them, either in flesh or in spirit. They are, in very truth, two in one flesh; and where there is but one flesh, there is also one spirit. They pray together, they worship together, they fast together; instructing one another, encouraging one another, strengthening one another. Side by side they visit God's church and partake of God's banquet; side by side they face difficulties and persecution, sharing their consolations...they never shun each other's company; they never bring sorrow to each other's hearts.

[13] William Stearns Davis, citing Juvenal "Satires", VI, II, 199 ff. Gifford's Trnsl "A Diatribe against the Women of Rome" Readings in Ancient History, II, Rome and the West (New York: Allyn and Bacon 1913), 247-248

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[3] See Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, chapters 30-33, (The Macmillan Company, NY, 1968), 511-576

[4] *Ibid.*, 511-576

[5] Alexis d'Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. II, Chapter 10 "The young woman as a wife", J.P. Mayer (ed), George Lawrence (transl)

[6] See Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, chapters 30-33, (The Macmillan Company, NY, 1968), 300ff.

[7] Proverbs 1:8, 4:6-13; 1 Kings 1:11; Proverbs 31:26

[8] Proverbs 31:20, 29-30

[9] Proverbs 31:15, 19, 20

[10] Proverbs 31:25, 29

[11] Proverbs 31:31

[12] William Holmes McGuffey made this "spiritual backbone of the American people" the heartbeat of his famous educational series McGuffey's Readers. His Readers were most decidedly Protestant Christianity.