

The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women 1558

John Knox

...To promote a woman to bear rule, superiority, dominion, or empire above any realm, nation, or city, is repugnant to nature; contumely [an insult] to God, a thing most contrary to his revealed will and approved ordinance; and finally, it is the subversion of good order, of all equity and justice.

And first, where I affirm the empire of a woman to be a thing repugnant to nature, I mean not only that God, by the order of his creation, has spoiled [deprived] woman of authority and dominion, but also that man has seen, proved, and pronounced just causes why it should be. Man, I say, in many other cases, does in this behalf see very clearly. [14]For the causes are so manifest, that they cannot be hid. For who can deny but it is repugnant to nature, that the blind shall be appointed to lead and conduct such as do see? That the weak, the sick, and impotent persons shall nourish and keep the whole and strong? And finally, that the foolish, mad, and frenetic shall govern the discreet, and give counsel to such as be sober of mind? And such be all women, compared unto man in bearing of authority. For their sight in civil regiment is but blindness; their strength, weakness; their counsel, foolishness; and judgment, frenzy, if it be rightly considered.

[15]I except such as God, by singular privilege, and for certain causes known only to himself, has exempted from the common rank of women, and do speak of women as nature and experience do this day declare them. Nature, I say, does paint them forth to be weak, frail, impatient, feeble, and foolish; and experience has declared them to be inconstant, variable, cruel, lacking he spirit of counsel and regiment. And these notable faults have men in all ages espied in that kind, for the which not only they have removed women from rule and authority, but also some have thought that men subject to the counsel or empire of their wives were unworthy of public office. [16]For thus writes Aristotle, in the second of his Politics. What difference shall we put, says he, whether that women bear authority, or the husbands that obey the empire of their wives, be appointed to be magistrates? For what ensues the one, must needs follow the other: to wit, injustice, confusion, and disorder. The same author further reasons, that the policy or regiment of the Lacedemonians (who other ways amongst the Greeks were most excellent) was not worthy to be reputed nor accounted amongst the number of commonwealths that were well governed, because the magistrates and rulers of the same were too much given to please and obey their wives. What would this writer (I pray you) have said to that realm or nation, where a woman sits crowned in Parliament amongst the midst of men?

"Oh fearful and terrible are thy judgments, O Lord, which thus hast abased man for his iniquity!"