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The Epiphany of Woman.

BY REV. A. J. STOKES, D. D.

An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Newberry, S. C., December 2, 1902.

THE FIRST EPIPHANY.

The first Epiphany of woman was in Eden, when the human race was young.

The crowning glory of mundane creation was the advent of man. The royal Psalmist wrote thus of him:—"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength, because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Thy heavens the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou visitest him. For Thou hast made him a little lower than God, (Elohim) and crownest him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet." Here it is evident, that in man was the excellency of the name of God in all the earth, and "His glory above the heavens."

Dr. Joseph Parker commenting on this passage says: "The Psalmist is not instituting a humiliating contrast between man and nature. The fifth verse proves this: 'For Thou hast made him but little lower than God.' Man is the second name on the register: God signed first, and passing the pen to man he signed second.

"There is nothing in all the heavens that can compare, so far as it is material, with the tiniest babe that coos in its Mother's arms. Man is greater than all he sees. Man does look little in stature when he stands against the Andes or the great Himalayan group. He feels physically small. But suddenly he

says: 'After all what is that hill. I will climb it, stand upon the top of it, plant a banner there, and call myself Conqueror.' So he may. There is no hill in all the world that man cannot climb, or cast down, and thus humiliate."

The land and sea are his vast domain. The winds and the waters obey him. He creates the ocean steamer which mounts the crest of the highest wave, and outstrips the winged winds—the railroad engine that outruns the storm. The electric fires and chemical affinities are at his command. He can reduce days to seconds of time, and bring the ends of the earth together in a moment, so that far off dwellers may become as our next door neighbors. He by spectrum analysis may know the elements and chemical compounds of the sun, moon and stars, as if he had them all in his little laboratory. He can weigh them as with the accuracy of avoirdupois scales; measure them as with a surveyor's chain; mark their course, and give bounds to their circuits. He can schedule their messengers of light, flashing on in their course at the rate of over a million and a half miles a minute. He can map out the whole heavens as if by Mercator's projection. To him God hath given "dominion over all the works of His hand" and "has put all things under his feet." He has made him as God to all inferior creation—the administrator of all the laws of nature, and the executor of the divine will in this lower world. His God-like power for dominion is in his power to know: and his omnipotence in his earthly sphere is limited only by the measure of his improvement of the power to know. Here he can do all things if he only knew how. Lost knowledge is lost power and dominion; increased knoweldge is increased power and dominion. The Son of God was the Son of Man—the ideal man—and in Him we have the expression of the dignity and dominion of man in his best estate.

Man in the beginning was the unit of the genus homo, without division into male and female—he had the possibilities of both in one. It is written: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them." In the development of the divine plan, the separation of the dual nature came, the female from the male, and two distinct beings were evolved from the one, called man and woman. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, because she

was taken out of man." She was a part and counterpart of him. So that "the man was not without the woman nor the woman without the man." They became separate, but co-ordinate beings, with correlated powers, consigned by the Creator, as a unit for the accomplishment of the mission of life appointed to each and to both of them. Any spirit of ambitious conflict by which one seeks to supplant the other is unnatural and vicious, and is subversive of the divine purpose in instituting the relation of man and woman. Several ladies asked Dr. A. T. Bledsoe, what he thought of the sentiment that "Woman was the inferior animal?" He replied, "We think it perfectly just." They exclaimed "What! do you with all of your pretended gallantry and admiration of the sex call woman the inferior animal?" He replied;—"Yes, that is precisely our opinion of the sex—inferior animals, but superior beings. In brute force, in all that constitutes the mere animal frame and nature, women are inferior to men; but in purity of mind, in refinement of sentiment, in all that most nearly assimilates our race to the good angels above, they are superior to men."

Bishop Hargrove expresses the distinction thus:—"If he is distinguished for courage, she for fortitude; if he for strength, she for delicacy; if he for analysis, she for synthesis; if he for reasoning, she for intuition; if he for persistence, she for patience; if he for invention, she for application; if he for firmness, she for flexibility; if he for grandeur, she for gracefulness; if he for boldness, she for beauty."

The Epiphany of Woman in Eden was one of the greatest, if not the greatest event in the early history of the race. As soon as she came into the life of man as a distinct being, her superior moral power became evident. The wily tempter discerned this fact, and used it for the down-fall of the race. This moral power in her was greater over him than any other power Satan could command. The woman yielded because she was deceived; man yielded to the persuasive power of woman. St. Paul said: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." He was proof against the false reasonings of Satan, but not against the moral power of woman. There is no power in the universe equal to moral power, and in human kind that power is most clearly evident in woman.

But if she tempted him to his fall, the only ray of hope to

him came through her. The divine declaration was, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." It was through her Seed life was to come to the world "dead in trespasses and sins." Through her we have a redemption that is greater than was creation. "'Twas great to speak a world from naught, 'twas greater to redeem.'" "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord"—the "Seed of the woman."

If she was first in sin, she suffered most by the fall. She lost her true place and largely her power. Then came the eclipse of her glory, and for more than forty centuries she bore the burdens of degradations that were well nigh intolerable. She was for the most part regarded, not only as "the inferior animal," but also as "the inferior being." Social and political equality was denied her—she became man's slave and foot-ball, as fit only to serve his passions and his pleasures.

This, however, was not universal. Here and there, through the centuries of darkness, the glint of her glory that was, and is yet to come, was seen. The influence of Sarah with Abraham was great, but it was not always good. Miriam, the minstrel prophetess, arose as a leader of a band of women, and a power among men, but her auspicious influence was lost by a vaulting ambition, and her jealousy of the position and power of her brother. Deborah, the ruler and judge, arose to bring deliverance to Israel. Esther, the interceding queen, saved the proscribed Jews in the time of peril, and caused the plotter of their destruction to be hanged on a gallows fifty cubits high, and cause the seal of state to pass to Mordecai, the kinsman and friend of the Jews. These and others are only exceptions. One woman of distinction, here and there, appeared through the centuries but to disappear as sand-hills before the sweep of the winds. There are also exceptions found in profane history, but we must forbear to mention them here.

THE SECOND EPIPHANY.

The long promised "Seed of the woman" had come at last. "For when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them

that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The Christian age, in its broadest sense, is the age of the world from the beginning, until the end of time. "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall put down all rule, and all authority and power." A gleam of the Sun of Righteousness was seen amid the gloom of Eden's dark'ning bowers, and it shone on above the thick clouds, and through an occasional rift along the ages, until the clouds broke away for a moment, and it shone in radiant splendor over Calvary. Since then the Christian age in a special sense began and continued. The Christian age, as it now appears, is woman's age. She was the Mother of Christ in an extraordinary sense. She bore Him, nursed Him and trained Him for His divine work of redemption. She stood sponsor for Him at the cradle. He was her sponsor on the Cross. In His crucial agony, beholding her and His beloved disciple standing by, He said "Woman behold thy son!" and to the disciple, "Behold thy Mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own house."

There was something in woman's heart which responded confidently to the character, mission and teachings of the Messiah. Women of all classes flocked to Him, and gave Him their trust and love. These felt the power of renewed revelation of divine love made by Him, and they rejoiced in the liberty with which Christ would make them free. "Accordingly the purest and richest human light that lies on the pages of the New Testament comes from the band of high minded, faithful and affectionate women, who were found in connection with Christ from the cradle to the Cross, His tomb and His resurrection. These embalming influences have operated on society with equal benefit and power. Woman, in the better portion of society, is now a renewed being. And yet her angelic career is only just begun. She sees what she may be, and what under the gospel she might be."

The gospel records tell of Elizabeth, the Marys, Anna, Joanna, Martha and of the many women, which followed from Galilee ministering unto Him. They were His truest, most unselfish friends. They were true to Him amid cruel scorn and battling hate. Through blinding tears they followed Him on His way to Calvary—with breaking hearts they witnessed His agony

and gave Him all their moral support by their sympathetic presence. They beheld His limp body taken from the Cross, and, following, saw where and how they laid Him in the sepulchre. Dark was the day and darker the night when the Prince of Glory died and was laid in Joseph's tomb, that was hewn in a rock, wherein never man was laid. There was literal darkness over all the land, and denser darkness fell upon the people of His choice. The light of hope had gone from the hearts of the bravest apostles. Peter thirty years after wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." All the faith then extant in the world was in true, faithful woman's heart. She kept the faith when all had fled. She was mindful of the body in the tomb as if there was something still to hope for, and she was intent that the Holy One should not see corruption. They planned an early visit to the sepulchre on the first day of the week, while it was yet dark; they were the first witnesses of His resurrection and the first to declare it by special commission—"Go tell my brethren." She was worthy of the trust committed.

"Not she, with trait'rous kiss her Saviour stung;
 Not she, denied Him with unholy tongue;
 She, while apostles shrank, could danger brave,
 Last at the Cross, and earliest at the grave."

If she was first in the evidence of sin, she was the first in the evidence of the resurrection, that brought justification unto life—life greater than that which was in Eden lost. The women were present in the ten days prayer meeting next preceding the day of Pentecost, and they received the infilling of the Holy Ghost, and the baptism of fire with the rest. For "These all united with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. * * * * They were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance." They took their part in declaring Jesus and the resurrection. They assisted the apostles and the evangel-

ists in their Christ given mission. To the Philippians St. Paul wrote: "And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women, which labored with me in the gospel—whose names are in the book of life." To the Romans:—"I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a servant (minister or deaconess) of the church, which is at Cenchrea; that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatever business she hath need of you for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus." "Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labored in the Lord." Lydia, the seller of purple was the first to accept Christ in all Europe. It has been said: "It was a sublime spectacle when this solitary woman embodied the Church of God in Europe, constituting herself its first member, and furnishing, in her own home, both parsonage and preaching place for St. Paul, bringing in first her own household and acquaintance, and foreshadowing the conquest of Europe and America for Christ, and through them the rest of the world."

Soon after the apostolic age the appearance of woman began to wane and the night of obscurity again gathered around her. While here and there conspicuous examples of her influence and usefulness appeared, she in the main was a proscrip. Even in the Church she in a measure lost her true place, designed for her in creation, and renewed to her in redemption. Then after centuries came the aurora of the returning day of her power, which brightened more and more until the middle time of the 19th century. For lack of time, we must pass over these years of darkness and returning light to speak of the third Epiphany of recent times.

THE THIRD EPIPHANY.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes has said: "I have been ready to believe that we have even now a new revelation, and the name of its Messiah is woman."

The Duchess of Southerland wrote:—"Were it not for the never silent voices of the past, one might imagine that the last decade of the 19th century bore the honor of the invention of woman."

The civilization and the evangelization of the world have tar-

ried in their highness and fullness because the world has been slow in appreciating the true relation and efficiency of woman in this high calling. The heathen idea of woman lingered too long for the good of the race. But the time of the renaissance has come. She is now entering upon all lines of work for self help and for the betterment of humanity, and she is proving herself conspicuously useful. There is no line in life which she is not touching with the best results. It is said that not less than 4,000,000 women in this country "earn their own bread." Of this number 250,000 are teachers, exclusive of 35,000 teachers of music; 10,000 are artists, 1,145 are clergymen, 888 are journalists, 2,725 are authors, and literary persons, 208 are lawyers and 160 are chemists. A woman manager of a California insurance company, it is said, receives a salary of \$10,000 a year. There are also skilled women doctors. In fact, as the intelligence of the world broadens and prejudice disappears the field for woman's successful employment is enlarged, and her possibilities become limitless. It is with reluctance we pass over many bright names and brilliant deeds of women, which come within the period of which we are treating. But we must limit the period and abridge the field of observation. This review, however, considering the occasion which calls us together, would be incomplete if the name of the "Mother of Methodism" were left out.

Dr. Adam Clarke said of her, "Mrs. Wesley had read much, and thought much; thus her mind was cultured. Greek, Latin, French, and both logic and metaphysics had formed part of her studies. She had a strong and vigorous mind, and undaunted courage." * * * "I have been acquainted with many pious females. I have read of the lives of others, but such a woman, take her all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted." To write her biography would be to write the wise and fruitful beginnings of the Church founded by her son, John Wesley. He owed more to her wise and inspiring counsel than to any other human influence. Had it not been for her advice, his spiritual enterprise might have been wrecked on the rocks of the prejudices of ecclesiasticism. Since then, that influence has been flowing on, and will continue to flow on by divine grace, until the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ." In the galaxy of English and American

women which shed much light on the pathway of life since the early days of Methodism, we have found stars of the first magnitude, but of these, we will only say, shine on, until the stars of time shall melt away in the splendor of eternal day. We must turn from considering the individual woman to woman's work in general.

The consecrated Christian woman in the home has proved a matchless power to save, and conserve the salvation of human kind. A pastorate will never fully appreciate what they owe to the wife and Mother of the Manse until the judgment shall reveal it. Nor will they fully understand until the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, how much the failures which they so bitterly charged against their pastor were more due to her who should have been his help-meet than to him alone. We may not know how much the efficiencies or failures of our brother members of the laity are due to Christly or unchristly wives. Their influence may not appear to the outer world, but it works in secret unto life or death. What they smile on lives, what they frown on dies, and the judgment will reveal it to their honor or shame. When the lightning blinds and blares we wonder at its power. But there is a subtle electrical entity which we do not see nor hear that makes the flash and roar possible, and by which all things consist. So is the spirit of woman. The flare and the blare may be lacking, but the power is there for good or evil. She is largely the life or death of the home.

Woman's power in the Church is in evidence. Fully two-thirds of the members of the Church are women. As the pastor looks from the pulpit to the pews, he sees more bonnets than bare heads. In these latter times she is first in the service of song in which divine truth, praise, prayer, and intercession are set to music—music that moves the heart to devotion, conviction and conversion; while incalculable good has been accomplished by the service of song, the organ loft controlled by unruly and undevotional spirits has caused much evil.

In the prayer-meeting, she, for the most part, is the sponsor for the Church. Let her heart grow cold and her lips silent in the secret place of the sanctuary, and the cry of the Psalmist will come again:—"Yea the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her

young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts my King and my God."

In the Sunday School she is largely the god-mother for the host of children who frequent there from Christian and unchristian homes. Unnumbered thousands have heard from her lips, for the first time, of God, their Creator, of Jesus, their Redeemer, of the Holy Spirit, their Sanctifier, and of heaven, the peaceful abode of the blest. Here she takes them through the kindergarten of this theological seminary to deeper and higher conceptions and convictions of truth until they are prepared for the fulness of the life in Christ Jesus.

"Woman's empire, holier, more refined,
Moulds, moves, and sways the fallen but God-breathed mind,
Lifting the earth-crushed heart to hope and heaven."

Woman's place in the secular school was once barred, and then contested. The appellation, "school-marm" was odious. But here too she has worked her way up to honorable recognition. All now admit that she has special qualifications, when fully equipped, for this noble service. If true to herself and her high calling, she is destined to labor as an educator side by side with her brother in the highest departments of intellectual and moral culture.

"Tis hers—
Delightful task, to rear the tender thought—
To teach the young idea how to shoot;
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind—
To breathe the enliv'ning spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast."

As a reformer, woman has no superior in the present age. The great dragon, drink, has been destroying more of the human race than wars, famines and pestilences combined. Men, for the most part, have looked on with indifference, at least with inactivity, while many have aided and abetted the monster in its evil deeds. For a time, woman looked on with helpless grief and breaking heart, because she was restrained from taking an active part in social or political reform. The time came at last when women felt that they could inaugurate a movement that might lessen, if it could not destroy, the evil. They visited drinking hells, and sung and prayed and used the power of persuasion to induce bar-keepers to cease their work of drunkard making and hell creating. When driven

from dram-shops and gilded saloons of death by rude hands, they knelt on the pavements and appealed to the Father of Mercies for help. Their labors were not without results. In some instances "the haunts of the drunkard were turned into places of prayer, rumsellers changed to evangelists, and sots to saints. The Woman's Temperance Union, baptized in tears and prayers, has a holy martyr history." In the furtherance of the cause they formed "Bands of Hope;" caused to be distributed books, papers, pamphlets and leaflets; made addresses to turn the public mind against the giant evil. They appeal to legislatures, State and National, to abate the curse by law. They secured some restrictive laws, and laws for scientific instruction concerning alcohol in public schools of thirty-five states and territories; and from the United States Congress similar laws for schools over which Congress has control,—the National Military Academy, and Naval Schools, and schools of the District of Columbia. Among the States which are lagging behind in this great movement of Christian civilization, is South Carolina. When under the inspiration of our women, our State Legislature was asked for prohibition against intoxicating liquors as a beverage, it gave us the dispensary. At first the gloved hand extended to the petitioners had the semblance of the hand of humanity, but when uncovered it was in verity the cloven foot of Satan. It gave a serpent for a fish—a scorpion for an egg. It is enough to make angels weep, if indeed there can be tears in heaven, and to make devils laugh, if there can be glee in hell, to see men voting and using their influence against their wives, mothers and daughters, who in grief and love are striving to save them from degradation and ruin.

Let us now glance at woman's work in Missions,—foreign and domestic. We can but glance at a work that is co-extensive with the world of need—a work which has been operated in all lines, which looks to the betterment of humanity and the glory of God. In treating of this world-wide theme, in which the women of Christendom have been somewhat interested, we must confine ourselves to the work of the women of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Since the partial emancipation of woman from the state of an ecclesiastical recluse, her mind has been active and her heart has been moved in contemplating the evils of those who sit in

the region of the shadow of death. Her Christ-like soul yearned to take some part in rescuing the perishing. She apprehended the fact that the chief cause of the degradation of the nations is the degradation of their women; that the elevation of the women would tend to the elevation of the masses; that the elevation of the woman must come through the ministry of women; that the woman missionray must be the pioneer to open the homes to the gospel of righteousness and peace; and this being done, the "Word of the Lord" may have free course and be glorified. Hence our women banded themselves into the society called the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. While some unorganized work was done at an earlier time, it was not until May, 1878, that the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, provided for its organized existence. Previous to this, Mrs. Lavinia Kelley, of Nashville, Tenn., and Mrs. Davidson, of Baltimore, Md., had been working and praying for the cause of Foreign Missions. They impressed the hearts of two other noble women,—Mrs. Julianna Hayes, of Baltimore, the first President of the organization, and Mrs. D. H. McGavock, of Nashville, Tenn., the first General Secretary,—and they, with others, worked with intelligence and zeal. The organization was perfected and met in its first session in Louisville, Ky., May, 1879. The first President ended her labors and passed into the heavens in 1895. She was succeeded in office by Mrs. M. D. Wightman, of Charleston, S. C. Aided by able coadjutors, the Society has greatly prospered under her presidency. In a late report, Mrs. S. C. Trueheart has this to say:—"The Board has never borrowed money, never incurred a debt, never failed in loyalty to the constituted authorities of the Church. It has sent out since 1878, ninety six missionaries and put in the treasury over a million and a half dollars. At this time we are supporting sixty-seven missionaries, one hundred and seventy teachers and native helpers, twenty-two boarding schools, sixty-one day schools (about 5000 pupils) six kindergartens, two hospitals, two Bible Colleges in China, sixty Bible Women, and one hundred and eighty three scholarships. Property owned by the Board is valued at \$403,469.00. Collected for this year \$104,017.97 (this is for the year 1901 and 1902.) Total membership of the Society, 71,724 members."

The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the South Caro-

lina Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized in this City, (Newberry, S C.) December 16, 1878, during the session of the Annual Conference presided over by Bishop W. M. Wightman. Mrs. M. D. Wightman was chosen president, and Mrs. J. W. Humbert was chosen Corresponding Secretary. Both of these hold thier respective offices with credit and efficiency. Their names are as household words within our Conference bounds and beyond. There are two hundred and seventy-three Auxiliary Societies, five thousand five hundred and thirty-three members. They contributed during the last fiscal year for the work \$7275.11. Since the beginning, 1879—1902, they have contributed for all purposes of the Society \$119,088.32.

The Woman's Home Mission Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, first known as The Woman's Department of Church Extension and four years later as the "Parsonage and Home Mission Society" and now as the "Woman's Home Mission Society," became an organized force of the Church under the action of the General Conference in 1886. Miss Lucinda B. Helm, of Elizabethtown, Ky., was the leader in this enterprise. For twelve years she gave her whole mind and heart for the development and usefulness of this Society and then she fell on sleep. The present officers are: Miss Belle H. Bennett, President; Mrs. R. W. McDonald, General Secretary; and Mrs. W. D. Kirkland, General Treasurer. The aim of this Society is declared to be "To enlist and organize Christian women and children in securing homes for itinerant preachers; in providing religious instruction for the neglected and destitute; and otherwise aiding the cause of Christ." At the end of the first six years of the organization it was announced that more parsonages had been built than in the first fifty years of American Methodism. Eight years later the annual report of the Society showed that during the thirteen years of its history, one thousand and thirty-four parsonages, or more than one half of the whole number built by the entire Church, had been aided by the Woman's Home Mission Society. The aggregate statistics of the Society from 1886 to 1902 are:—

Number of members,	29,034
Receipts for local and connnectional work,	\$725,945.66
Number of parsonages built and aided,	1,265

Money donated to parsonages,.....	\$117,284.23
Money loaned to parsonages,.....	\$37,100.00
Value of supplies furnished preachers' fami- lies not noted above,.....	\$44,921.06
Number of Boarding Schools supported,.....	4
Number of Night Schools supported,.....	5
Number of Missionaries and Teachers employed,.....	47
Rescue Homes and Doors of Hope,.....	2
Value of property owned by the Society, ..	\$69,000.00

The Woman's Home Mission Society of the South Carolina Conference was organized in 1893. For five years it made but little progress. It was reorganized November, 1898. Mrs. W. W. Duncan was chosen President; Mrs. W. L. Wait was chosen Corresponding Secretary, and Mrs. W. A. Rogers, Treasurer. In 1899, Miss Belle Bennett and Mrs. W. D. Kirkland met the Conference officers in executive meeting. From that time, the work has gone steadily forward with increasing strength and usefulness.

The General Conference of 1902 provided for deaconesses. The principles and work involved in this office have long obtained in the Church,—in more or less degree even from Apostolic times. It has obtained in our Church in a limited degree without the name and paraphernalia of office. Our Church polity is the result of accretion. While it accords with the truest philosophy, it has not been thought out as such; but it has been developed as needs and experience have dictated. The Church legislators did not reason from cause to effect but from effect to cause. When they saw the good effects of certain innovations they adopted them. The conservatism of our branch of the Church has made us slow to see the needs and to assay the experience of the office of deaconess. But it has come at last, and we hope the action of the late General Conference is but the harbinger of the greater usefulness of our women in church work. We will let Miss Mary Helm, the Editor of *Our Homes*, the organ of the Home Mission Society, say what a deaconess is. "What is a Deaconess? (1) She is a consecrated Christian woman. (2) She is so circumstanced that she can give her whole time to the service of God. (3) She is a trained worker. (4) She is authorized and appointed by the Church. (5) She asks for no salary, only that her necessities

be provided for, when she has no means of support. (6) She is at liberty to retire from the work at any time she may desire. (7) She wears an ordinary, simply made dress of uniform color with those in the same office, with some distinctive mark of that office, possibly white strings to her bonnet. (8) She lives in a Deaconess' home, where there are sufficient numbers of Deaconesses in one community, for the sake of economy, convenience and companionship. (9) As a pastor's assistant, she becomes a leader for women of that congregation in church work. They learn from her how to work more effectively and they are led into lines of service they have not entered upon. (10) She may be connected as a Deaconess with her own home Church, live in her Father's house, and be supported by him, if he so desires, just as in the past, only that she will do better work."

These statements and statistics but inadequately show the great work our sisters are doing. During the last half century, the Church has accomplished more by the aid of their self-sacrificing efforts than in a thousand years before. Christian women now are taking their places in evangelizing and Christianizing the world which has long waited for their coming. "Let woman appreciate her opportunity, for it is the golden age of her reign, and she holds a scepter that sways empires. Let her prove herself to be ordained of God to fulfill a holy mission."