

"GOD'S WOMAN."

The following somewhat abbreviated speech of Reverend Anna Shaw before the late woman suffrage convention in Washington, is respectfully dedicated by the editor of this department to the Reverend Dr. Ross C. Houghton, of Grace church, this city:

The first stage, through which every reform must pass, is that of the assertion that it is impossible; it is impracticable; it is ridiculous; it is unthinkable; and they who begin in the beginning of reform, and bring the question before the people, must stand and bear all the scorn, all the loneliness, all the "aloneness" of great reformers in great questions, and like the Lord, Jesus Christ, they must learn to tread the wine-press alone. Womanhood has had her leaders, who have taken the stand and borne the scorn of it; and now you and I to-day are able to walk in a smooth path to be welcomed by thousands, to be cheered for the sentiments for which they were scorned, and to be paid for doing that for which they paid for the privilege of doing. (Applause.)

Eve was not Mrs. Adam, because she was the wife of Mr. Adam. She was no more Mrs. Adam because she was the wife of Mr. Adam than Adam was Mr. Adam because he was the husband of Mrs. Adam; not a bit. (Laughter.) They were both Adams, and neither of them alone was Adam. They were Adam together. (Applause and laughter.) You can never have a male Adam or a female Adam. You must have a male and female Adam, and you have manhood and womanhood—humanity.

The great divine who originated this subject for me was lecturing before an institute called an institute of sacred theology, in the city of New York. Before him was a class of students, male and female, and he was defining to the male students what they, the males, might permit the females to do. "Now," he says, "there are some things which the women may be permitted to do." Now, we like that, don't we? Something that we may be permitted to do. "They may be permitted to dispense certain charities; they may be permitted to speak in prayer and class meetings; they may be permitted to do certain lines of church work. There are other things which women may not be permitted to do. Among the things which they may not be permitted to do, is to hold high official relation to the church, to become its ministers and to dispense its sacraments. Now, these things woman may not be permitted to do."

In referring to the relation of woman to the church, he spoke of the argument, raised by many women, that it was the design of God that women should take any position they might occupy, the women going to the bible to prove their position, and the one woman upon whom we have all laid our claim and our boast, is that grand old woman, who was able to cry out in looking over Israel in its hours of peace: "there was trouble, there was dissension, there was unrest in Israel until I, Deborah, a mother in Israel, rose;" and we point to the fact that the judges of Israel were always understood by those people to be divinely selected for their position; and being thus divinely selected we cannot assume that any human being could have taken this position who was not recognized by the people at least, to have been chosen by God, and even with the authority of the bishop back of it, we cannot assume that God did not know what he was doing when he chose Deborah to be a judge in Israel.

If the bishop thinks God make a mistake, he will have to wait forever to correct the mistake, for it is done and we can not go back on the record. Now then, this woman found a country disturbed, a country in the midst of great unrest, a country where the judges had been taking bribes from the people, a country where the people were utterly demoralized, a people who dared not walk on their highways because of thieves or robbers, a people who were compelled to go secretly through cross lots in order to get from city to city, but during the forty years of her reign as judge of Israel, the whole condition of things was over-turned and we are told that she judged all the people in righteousness, and the people had peace for forty years.

Just think of forty years of peace. We have never known such a period since that day. (Applause.) Now, then, this woman was not, we are told by Bishop Vincent, God's woman. If, then, she was not God's woman, whose woman was she? (Laughter.) And if God is not able to recognize his own, what will become of us at the last?

The bishop says, there are certain classes of women who are God's women. We want to know that so we can get over on the right side. (Laughter.) God's women are the Ruths, the Rachels and the Miriams. We have some of the Miriams here. Now, Ruth was certainly a remarkable young woman, because she was absolutely devoted to her mother-in-law, (Great laughter and applause), and that takes a great woman.

Now, I shall never rise to say that a woman devoted to her mother-in-law is not God's woman. (Laughter.) But then Ruth had some peculiar ways of getting along in this world. I hardly think the bishop would like to have some of us who are unmarried follow Ruth's method of catching a husband. I hardly think he would like us to follow in her lines of courtship, as the two things that she is most known for are devotion to her mother-in-law and a peculiar method of obtaining a husband. (Laughter.)

Then the bishop tells us about Mary. There are many Marys, and the bishop does not designate which of them it was. If he means the Mary out of whom seven devils were cast I would not agree with him, because that kind of Mary was not God's woman. It was not the Mary that washed His feet and wiped them with the hairs of her head in the way of penance, because there was no necessity for that kind of penance. If it was the Mary who was His mother, the bishop brought out the wrong Mary to prove his case. What have we here? In the fullness of the times God needed for the world a Redeemer. How should he give the Redeemer to the world? He gave the Redeemer to the world by coming among men and choosing out of the world a woman to become the mother of the Savior of the race, and God and a woman gave to the world its Redeemer. Men were counted out of the transaction. (Applause.)

Then there was another Mary, and she is the Mary whom I have taken as my example in my profession.

The other Mary was the Mary who stood by the tomb of the Lord, and there at the mouth of the open tomb she received the first divine commission from the Divine one himself to go out into the world to preach the gospel of a risen Lord.

We have one other Mary and that Mary was the one who sat at the feet of the Lord, learning of Him theology, and the only reproof the Lord ever gave a woman was not to Mary, the theological student, but to Martha, the woman that worried about her house

work, and wanted Mary to give up theology and go into the kitchen and cook dinner. (Laughter.)

I have a few minutes more. Now, then, here are the Marys, two of whom were singers according to the teaching—three of whom, one was the mother of the Lord, doing the greatest public work for the race that the world has ever had done; the other a woman who was a theological student learning at the feet of the Master; the other the first divinely commissioned preacher of the resurrection.

I am glad that Bishop Vincent considers that women ministers are God's women; that women theological students are God's women, and that the woman who was the mother of the Savior of the world was also God's woman. I believe they were, and at the same time I believe that the Miriams and the Esthers and the Vashitis were God's women too.

When I was a girl, I read the bible through in order to select from it the two people who were to be my hero and heroine through life. In those days the children had to read the bible. It was before we developed so much. Now it is not considered the proper thing for us to read the bible and we send it across the sea to the missionaries. My hero was Jacob, my heroine was Vashiti. Vashiti disobeyed her husband, and so she left her palace and castle because she had disobeyed her husband. I selected out of the lot Vashiti and I selected her because she did disobey her husband and because she was divorced in and I selected her because she recognized dignity and righteousness of her own right and self respect; a woman who refused to become the puppet of a king, and of his drunken courtiers; a woman ready to give up her throne, a husband and a kingdom—such a woman is God's woman, husband, or no husband. (Great applause.)

I wish the world were full of Vashitis to-day, standing by the right of individual self-respect, and I sigh to God for such womanhood.

We have heard that motherhood is a crown of glory. They say motherhood is the greatest crown of glory which a woman can wear. We answer no; motherhood is not; the greatest crown of glory which a woman can wear. We answer; motherhood *may not* be a crown of glory at all. Motherhood may or may not be a crown of glory which requires that there shall be a something back of motherhood to define what motherhood shall be, and in this something back of motherhood there is that which shall make it a crown of glory. Motherhood may, instead of becoming a crown of glory, become a crown of shame.

The highest crown of glory which a woman can wear is not motherhood. The highest crown of glory which a woman can wear is *womanhood*. (Applause.) True, noble, strong, healthy, spiritual womanhood, the daughter of the king, the child of God, the heir of the Lord Jesus Christ, equal with Bishop Vincent, or any other man in the world. (Applause.)

Motherhood, if the mother is first a woman, shall become a crown of glory, but womanhood shall be her greatest crown of glory, whether it be motherhood or spinsterhood. (Applause.) The mother heart of woman, the mother heart that reaches out to the race and finds a wrong and rights it, finds a broken heart and heals it, finds a bruised life ready to be broken, a woman's instinct with mother love which is the expression of Divine love, finding any wrong, any weakness, any pain, any sorrow, anywhere in the world, and reaches out her hand to right the wrong, to heal the pain, to comfort the suffering, such a woman is God's woman. It matters not where she may be; where born, under what skies she has lived, she is God's woman, and at the last she shall find her God. (Great applause.)

A STRONG PLEA.

VERSAILLES, KENTUCKY, April 9, 1891.

DEAR MRS. DUNIWAY:

The action of the constitutional convention on the question of married women's property rights gives to the world another evidence of the defenseless position of woman. Possession is nine points in law, and the men in that body who wireworked to defeat this just measure, and those who have voted against it, show conclusively that they are anxious to fortify themselves, and take *all* the law allows them, even if it heaps injustice on the helpless and robs them of their heritage. Selfishness and self importance are the predominant traits of human nature, and unless their true nobility of soul, coupled with justice, rise in the soul of man and his great nature dethrones them, he can place a soothing plaster on his conscience, and even wrong his wife, to sustain a false position before the world or minister to self interest.

The married women of Kentucky are wronged, deeply wronged, by the law taking possession of their property and rendering them civil and legal nonentities, and for years they have been hoping and praying that our men were growing so grandly that they would remove this stigma from them. The laws in every state in the union are a reproach to Kentucky law on this question. Numbers of women have removed from the state and taken their property where civilization is further advanced. I venture the assertion that there is not a woman in the state that does not pray for just property laws. Letters from all quarters come to me constantly from women that are wronged and robbed, the pages of many of them scathed with tears, rich women with houses and lands, and poor women with only a cow and a pig.

We have been fighting the property rights battle for three years, and although defeated at every point, except the securing of the law that makes a married woman's wages her own, we are not discouraged; but on the contrary we are encouraged when we contemplate that in the general assembly this question received a larger share of attention than any other brought before that body, and that it has been before the constitutional convention six times and brings on the warmest debate—so warm that at times the sergeant-at-arms has been called to restore order—and we are cheered when we know the caliber of the men who are our champions and how they are increasing in numbers. Some of our opponents had not the manhood to keep their grip on their wives' property by an open vote, but took the cowardly method of defeating the measure by running out of the house, thereby breaking a quorum. These chivalrous Kentuckians belong to the age when purses were of the masculine gender, when women sat at the window of turreted castles and threw their handkerchiefs down to knights, and hated rivals rushed at them and knocked their tin hats off. I have conversed and corresponded with a large number of women on this subject, and have never met one that is not hoping for the success of this measure. Women can hope and pray if they are not allowed to speak, and there are thousands of women who are not