

In conclusion, therefore, we say, when the officers go forth to their work, with a thorough preparation in head and heart consecrated to Christ and his cause on earth, and when the multitude of disciples learn to follow with implicit obedience the law of the Lord, and submit themselves one to the other, will the church have that influence in the world that was designed she should have, and the too frequent cry, the church is dead, would seldom be heard. May the Lord help us to do his will.

A Plea for Woman's Aid.

AN ESSAY BY MRS. A. M. BEDWELL.

Read at the State Meeting, Salem, Or., Sept. 6, 1883.

My Dear Sisters and Brethren:

In making this appeal for the aid of women here I shall only modestly request that the sisters may be permitted to take such part as they may choose in these Co-operation Meetings of your State Board and societies of like kind of their own. I feel it commendable to desire to have a share in the work of the Lord. That this is a worthy sentiment and ambition I think none will deny. I think the love of Christ should prompt the heart of a converted woman to honor him and serve him just as it does the heart of a converted man. Surely there is a provision made for the gratification of these divine impulses. Surely there is a sphere in which the heart of consecrated women may exert their influence upon the church, and contribute their share to its moral and spiritual forces without being guilty of a misdemeanor, indiscretion, or some other hard names familiar with many. I have thought sometimes that the moral desolation of the church was due to the absence of the influence of real, God-fearing, intelligent women; and I sometimes think the lack of pious, devoted men to go out and preach the gospel is due to the fact that there are so few mothers worthy of such sons. Is there no transmission of moral and spiritual qualities? It is acknowledged that the principle holds good in everything else. The Apostle Paul clearly admits it, and assures himself of the worthiness of his son Timothy on this ground, when he says, "How unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day longing to see thee, remembering thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; having been reminded of the un-

feigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded in thee also." I know the age in which we live is unfavorable to the development of the highest type of consecrated piety among women. The love of display and worldly pleasure, and a desire to gratify our ambitions vanity rather than share in the work of the church or even be the mothers of its most worthy and gifted preachers and servants, I fear we study more about how to appear in the house of the Lord in showy apparel than we study the revelation of the best friend woman ever had, whose teachings has redeemed her from abject slavery and made her the companion of man—the equal heir with him of an inheritance incorruptible and eternal. Then, my sisters, let us give our time to the study of the Scriptures more fully, and to the aid of the church. The need of these times of missionary enterprises should be an abiding conviction in every individual heart of the imperative character of Christ's command: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." This command demands a broad and all-inclusive interpretation. The Apostle Paul said, "Woe is to me if I preach not the gospel." Is it for ordained ministers only to feel this condemnation. All believers in Christ are made "priests unto God," and all are made preachers of the gospel. It is not, of course, given to all to stand in the pulpit; but no one who has been accepted by Christ and is filled with his spirit can fail to declare in some way the blessedness of salvation; and those who with the blessed assurance of faith in their hearts, neglect to use the power and influence for the conversion of their fellowwomen fail in a positive duty. All are not called to the same work; but there is a place and a work for everyone. It may not be our privilege to declare from the sacred desk the "unsearchable riches of Christ," nor to be advisers in church affairs; nor even to speak or pray in public; but we have it in our power to advance the interest of Christ's cause both at home and abroad. If we have been blessed and made happy we want our neighbors to enjoy our happiness. We should feel it our duty then to contribute of our substance for the support of those who go out as missionaries or teachers, and in doing this we have

an important part in their salvation. I was asked a short time ago what it was to be a Christian if all denominational people were not. I said I suppose to be a denominational Christian was easy enough, but to become a Christian after the Christlike pattern is quite another thing. Let us talk of its meaning and seek to understand its duties, and learn aright its responsibilities; as God-loving women let us take up life's tangled threads and weave of them a web of beauty and harmony. Our walks in life may be different, but we all have one common object—that of making our homes good and pure, our lives above reproach, and aiding those around us who need help and encouragement. There are weak ones we may aid and strengthen, erring ones to be led back to paths of virtue and uprightness, and desponding ones to cheer. But it is ours to aid wherever there is need, ours to dispel dark clouds of doubt and unrest, and let the blessed sunlight through and touch each heart. Angels are the Father's heavenly messengers, but we may be his earthly ones clad in the armor of purity, with his love as a shield and helmet, where may not woman venture? what may not woman accomplish? Lives she ever so quietly, so that she lives purely her influence and power are untold. Wherever a pure woman dwells there rests the sure blessings of God; her good influences may flow like healing balm and life-giving nourishment to the great world beyond. "While all my soul gives manhood humble reverence," I would not undercate its great worth and beauty, but woman is the mother of nations, she it is who more than any other moulds the lives and characters of generations; Oh, that we could realize more fully the sacredness of our calling. To the reverent eyes of children, mother is God. A mother's loving prayers and self-sacrifices, a sister's pleadings, a wife's devotion are things which sink too deep in the heart to be forgotten. Live where she may, in town or country, in humble cot or palace, the true woman is queen sisters; let us not forget this; let us also remember the model woman of Solomon's time; her price is far above riches. The one woman of all others, whom a royal son would desire to complete his happiness. Though for ages this noble character has been before the daughters

of mankind; it has been only in these favored latter days of privilege and promise that the complete realization of the lovely ideal has been, to any extent possible. Through the portraiture of vital truth we will look down and ask, In what age of the world prior to our own was such a woman upheld as a divine model? It is only in these times that knowledge of anatomy, physiology and hygiene has been spread among women and with it the consciousness that ignorance is folly and neglect sin, and that their responsibilities as women place them under solemn obligations to regard the wellbeing of their own bodies. We are also told of the model woman, that "she girdeth her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms." Strength and honor are her clothing and "as a natural consequence, when not a self-made invalid or prematurely old," she shall rejoice in time to come. From early days of church history, until quite recently, a disregard of personal appearance, backed by misunderstood apostolic injunction, has been considered a test of grace. Now it is well known that if the heart is right, beautiful garments, so far from detracting from real virtue, may even adorn it. But, over three thousand years ago, a wise woman received unequivocal praise for a proper pride in her becoming attire, "She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple." Not only in aged past, but within the present century, child-like dependence and submissive ignorance were considered womanly virtues, and a liberal education was looked upon with dread and suspicion, as an enemy to feminine grace. Yet not of a childish dependant, submissive, ignorant woman could it possibly have been said, ("she openeth her mouth with wisdom,") and for a woman to earn money, or transact business outside of her own home, was an occasion of humiliation and disgrace under the old social conditions. But Solomon's woman is able to assist her husband and enrich her family, as we are shown, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil," "She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh diligently with her hands," "She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar," "She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she