

were ready in their Christian zeal to go quite to the verge of the social proprieties. That line our Congregational sisters are in no sort of danger of crossing.

Many things are, however, already well done in our churches by our women, and other things wait to be done by them. In the support of the gospel on the secular side they bear an honourable part. Like Johanna and Chuza, the good women of these days "minister to the Lord of their substance." Few churches are built or furnished, and few church debts are paid, without their active help; their industry and skill are always relied on in furnishing the ways and means of carrying on the church work.

The work of beautifying the sanctuary is largely committed to the women. Much can be done to render the house of God a homelike and attractive place. Flowers for the Sunday service, bright mottoes and cheerful decorations for the prayer room, and the Sunday school room; a thousand other little gifts and services that tend to make the church a pleasant home for the people, are gladly offered by the women of our churches. Such work as this must not be lightly esteemed.

The social atmosphere of the Church must be mainly created by its women. The social opportunities are theirs, and the social work must be chiefly done by them. If the Church is to be a real brotherhood; if helpful sympathy is to be the law of its life; if its members are to bear one another's burdens, and share one another's joys; if the vows of fellowship spoken before the communion table are to be kept, the work of *manifesting* this fellowship must be taken up by Christian women.

They have it in their power to make the Church in this respect what Christ meant it to be. They can banish the clannish and exclusive spirit which sometimes creeps into it; they can show us how to use our social opportunities as well as our money benevolently; how, by personal acquaintance and friendly intercourse, we may do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith. Here is a vast and fruitful field of practical Christian labour for the women of our churches. It is at this point that our Christianity is weakest. What is called Christian society is by no means governed by the Christian law. If it is to be brought under subjection to this law the largest part of the work must be done by Christian women.

In the public services of the Church our Christian women have assisted as singers and as Sunday school teachers—both extremely valuable services. A very large part of the work of teaching the Gospel, as distinguished from preaching it, has been done at home and abroad by women. They have not helped hitherto in the prayer-meetings except in the singing, but there are many good reasons why they should. In Massachusetts they constitute more than two-thirds of our membership; in other States nearly the same proportion; and to exclude two-thirds of our Church members from active participation in the social meetings seems, on the face of it, a needless waste of power.

It is true that many modest women are averse to speech-making, and so for that matter are many modest men; but there is no reason why all the services of the prayer-room should consist of speech-making and formal praying. It is possible to attain unto a degree of familiarity in the conference meeting which shall admit of short questions and suggestions from those who are in their seats. If a good many of the speeches that we hear were condensed into a single sentence, the gain in point of impression would be immense.

The question as to the rights of woman in the Church is easily answered. They have exactly the same rights as men to vote and hold office. There may be a question as to the wisdom of extending to women the franchise in the State; for civil government rests on physical force, and a vote which has not a bayonet behind it is not of much account. What we want in the State is not so much better laws as a better enforcement of law; and this is a work to which women are not called. The basis of the Church organization is not force, but faith and love; the weapons of its warfare are not carnal, and women can wield them as