

## The New Opportunity for Baptist Women

Address delivered before the Baptist World Alliance at Stockholm on July 26

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Jesus Christ is the great Emancipator of woman. He alone among the founders of the great religions of the world looked upon men and women with level eyes, seeing not their differences, but their oneness, their humanity. He alone put no barriers before women in his religious teaching, but promulgated one law, equally binding upon men and women; opened one gate to which men and women were admitted upon equal terms.

A striking illustration of his casteless, sexless attitude is found in the story of his conversation with the Samaritan woman by Jacob's well. She was only an ignorant woman of the town, of loose virtue, and yet to her Jesus opened up the deep places in his gospel, revealing to her that which he had not yet told to any of his disciples—"I that speak to thee, am he;" "He who drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst;" "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

### No Area Fenced Off for Men

In the mind of the Founder of Christianity there is no area of religious privilege fenced off for the exclusive use of men. In this attitude Jesus Christ stands absolutely alone among religious teachers.

The new implications in regard to the position of women had an immediate effect upon the practice of the rising Christian church. So great was the change that expressions of the new liberty had to be checked by the Apostle Paul, in the interests of the reputation of the church and the decent and orderly conduct of its business. But the significant thing is not the caution to the women, but the presence of a new driving force in the rising Christian community, revealed in the activities of the women; the seven daughters of Philip who prophesied; Priscilla and her husband, who had a church in their house, and who took Apollos and instruct-

ed him; Phoebe, servant of the church, who carried under her robe the manuscript of the letter to the Romans, and that long list of women who find a place in the closing greetings of Paul's letters.

As the up-gushing spring of the new life in Christ mingled with the turbid stream of Greek and Roman civilization, much of the beautiful simplicity and freedom of the way was lost, and women were shut up again in the prison of inhibitions and conventions. But Christianity never wholly ceased to feel the powerful upthrust of the Master. His ideals and ideas were working like yeast in the lump of Christian civilization. To-day they emerge into open view in the growing power of democracy, and in the enlarging sphere of women. Back of all the urge of democratic ideas as regards state and sex, stands Christ, the Emancipator.

It is but natural that so democratic a body as the Baptists should be among the first to further and to recognize the emancipation of women. For hierarchies, of every name, have an instinctive reaction consistently opposed both to democracy and its handmaid, the emancipation of women. It has been the radical Christian groups who have seen most clearly and maintained most fearlessly the separation of church and state, and the full participation of woman in all the activities of organized Christianity.

What, then, are the opportunities of Baptist women in this great new day? I shall mention but three: Education, organization, service.

Today, for the first time on any world-wide scale, women have opened to them the educational facilities of civilization. The new generation can hardly realize what were the educational disabilities of women in the past, shut out as they were from the great universities, from the professional training schools and from the practices of the liberal arts. Most of the