

that there is "a time to be silent," as well as "a time to speak," and to know the one from the other. She must not appear to set herself up as the teacher of men. There is a foolish pride about a man that makes him kick at the idea of a woman showing him anything he ought to know; and a woman who would do good must never forget that. She must try to win, not to compel; she must endeavour to draw not to drive. A wife would be acting very foolishly who began preaching the Gospel to her husband when he came in tired, wet, and hungry, without allowing him to rest, to clean himself, or to get refreshed. A sister would find her advice little valued by her brother who thought it proper to give it before company. A mother would be most unwise who gave her sons a severe lecture on the sin of drunkenness, at the very moment when they came home intoxicated. Abigail showed her wisdom in not speaking to Nabal while he was full of drink; she knew that her words would be wasted on him, and waited till the morning. The wife of Samson might have known she would lose her hold on her husband's affections, by teasing and vexing him in the days of the marriage feast. Esther watched her opportunity for speaking to her husband; she waited for the door to be made open for presenting her petition, and so gained her end. The saying of Solomon should never be forgotten: "A word spoken in season, how good is it!"

A woman who would be useful in her own home, must be careful to encourage the smallest beginnings of religion in those about her. The first actings of grace are often exceedingly small, so small as to escape observation. The first growth of gracious inclinations in a soul is often very slow, very easily checked; and if checked, perhaps retarded for years. No man can tell the importance of cherishing the first movings and drawings of the heart towards God. It may be only a willingness to hear, or a readiness to join in prayer, or a different treatment of the Bible; and yet this may be the first step that will lead on at least to a close walk with God. Blessed are those women who lend a helping-hand at such a turning-point in a soul's history, and take up even the smallest stumbling-block out of its way! Coldness, and want of sympathy, often throw the inquiring soul back. Happy is the man who has any near him to say, like Leah and Rachel, "Whatsoever the Lord hath said unto thee, do."

I bring these things forward as seeds of thought. I hope that all women who read them will consider and think them over. I want them to understand how much they can do, how much depends on them, and how great is their responsibility in the sight of God.

Of course it would be easy to add to the paper. I might speak of the vast field of usefulness which is open to women in the train-

ing of children. It is not too much to say that the first seven years of life depend entirely upon mothers and nurses. The first seven years contain the foundation of character for life. "The first seven years of young England are in the hands of women!"

I might speak of what women may do in the matter of visiting the poor and ministering to the sick. There are hundreds of cases continually arising in which a woman is a far more suitable visitor than a man. She need not put on a peculiar dress, or call herself by a Roman Catholic name. She has only to go about, in the spirit of her Saviour, with kindness on her lips, gentleness in her ways, and the Bible in her hands, and the good that she may do is quite incalculable. Happy, indeed, is that parish where there are Christian women who "go about doing good!" Happy is that minister who has such helpers!

I conclude this paper by asking any woman, who is not convinced by what I say, to take up the Bible and run her eyes over the histories it contains. If she wants proof of the influence that women have in their hands, let her notice how women leave their marks at almost every step in God's Word. Their influence, I freely grant, has not always been for good. But influence they have had, and influence they will have, as long as the world stands.

Ever in the garden of Eden, the daughters of men before the Flood, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, Rachel, Potiphar's wife, Miriam, Pharaoh's daughter, Jethro's daughter, Rahab, Jael, Deborah, Jephthah's daughter, Delilah, Ruth, Hannah, Abigail, Michal, Bathsheba, Jezebel, Athaliah, Jehoshabeath, Belshazzar's mother, Elisabeth, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalen, Martha and Mary, Sapphira, Dorcas, Lois, Eunice,—who that reads the Bible is not familiar with these names? Who can forget how they come up at almost every turn, and have a place and a portion in almost every story? To say, in the face of these names, that women have no influence, and are of no importance, is simply absurd. Let them know that they have a mighty influence, and let them use it for good. What the oil is to the machinery, what the whetstone is to the scythe, what the fire is to the steam-engine, what the stream is to the water-wheel, all this the woman may be to the man. Let her remember it, and strive daily to do good.

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"Three things," said the Rev. Dr. Henry, "appeared to have been uninjured by the Fall: the song of birds, the beauty of flowers, and the smile of infancy, for it is difficult to conceive how either of these could have been more perfect had man remained holy; as if God would leave us something pure to remind us of the Paradise we have lost, and to point us to that which we shall regain."