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THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE DISCIPLES
OF CHRIST MOVEMENT, 1865 - 1900

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Fred Arthur Bailey
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ABSTRACT

America's largest indigenous religious movement, the Disciples of Christ was a microcosm of midwestern and southern middle class attitudes toward woman's status in the late nineteenth century. Between 1865 and 1900, the movement divided with the church's majority emphasizing ecumenism and its minority stressing evangelism. At the same time, the two sides of the movement engaged in a spirited debate over woman's proper role in both church and society. Liberal, ecumenical Disciples generally accepted female ordination, approved of women voting, and urged their sisters to engage in moral reform. Their conservative, evangelistic brethren rejected each of those ideas. Nonetheless, their divided concept of woman's role was far less dissimilar than it appeared to those involved in the debate. Fundamentally, liberal and conservative Disciples perceived of woman's status as arising out of her domestic responsibilities.

Almost all Disciples rejected such woman's rights as ordination, voting and the privilege to campaign for moral reform when advocated by nineteenth century feminists. Essentially the feminists worked under the assumption that the equality of the sexes justified more rights for women. Such logic was anathema to the Disciples who assumed that equal rights would lead to sexual immorality, destruction of the American family, and disorder in society.

The church's debate over the question of woman's rights generally revolved around her status as homemaker and mother. Conservatives affirmed that woman's greatest influence was exercised only in the home. Christian mothers had the obligation to train their daughters for maternal responsibilities and to prepare their sons to engage in the active world beyond the family. Whenever a woman left the home for any purpose, she ran the risk of soiling her purity and of neglecting her family.

On the other hand, liberal Disciples found the cause of woman's rights acceptable when associated with those whom they saw as modest females campaigning to save or preserve the sanctity of the home. Working under both the assumption of woman's moral superiority to man and the belief that the female was more inclined to protect the family than the male, ecumenical ministers granted to women a much wider social and church role. Liberal churchmen believed that women should preach because the tender pleadings of the more virtuous sex were missing from the pulpit; they assumed that mothers should vote because they would protect their children by supporting prohibition, the abolition of prostitution, and the outlawing of gambling; and they believed that women should engage in moral reform because "organized mother love" would bring the virtues of the Christian family into society as a whole.

Despite the vast amount of rhetoric expended by the Disciples over the question of woman's status, they differed

only slightly in their emphasis. Conservatives believed that woman best served by remaining cloistered in the home and there protecting it from the evils of the outside world; their liberal brethren affirmed that she best served by securing rights sufficient to enable her to go into the world and there combat the evils that threatened her domestic felicity.

PREFACE

In the last third of the nineteenth century, middle class Americans experienced a profound sense of uneasiness. The relative stability of antebellum society had been replaced by rapid industrialization and urbanization in the Northeast, by complicated agricultural problems in the Midwest and West, and by the need to rebuild in the post-war South. As a result, Americans engaged in a search for order, hoping to restore the values of a simple agricultural past. Given the Victorian belief that womankind maintained society's traditional values, middle class spokesmen looked to the female sex to usher in a virtuous millennium. The result was a sentimental portrayal of women, especially mothers, as the protectors and the perpetuators of cultural values in the commonwealth. The idealized woman so regulated her home as to make it a bulwark against the evils of the outside world. On the other hand, those women who protested male domination in society and who demanded the vote and other rights on an equality with men were viewed as part of those forces leading to social disorder and decadence. If the idealized woman was overly praised, these latter women were almost universally condemned.

As America's largest indigenous religious body, the Disciples of Christ faced almost every social issue of the nineteenth century and their periodicals contained a wealth

of material related to the status of women. For essentially two reasons, this movement provides an excellent source for a case study of Victorian women. First, the Disciples did not focus their attention entirely upon woman's role in society. To be sure, they wrote at length concerning woman's role in the home, the propriety of women preaching, the expediency of woman's suffrage, and other woman-related issues, but they did so only within the context of their interest in a wide variety of other social and theological issues. Thus the Disciples were more concerned with woman as she related to their overall view of society as a whole, than in promoting specific goals of any particular movement.

Second, the Disciples of Christ was a troubled church splitting into ecumenical and evangelistic wings. As the church's schism widened, the movement's attitude toward woman's role divided as well. Liberal, ecumenical ministers were much more inclined to allow their sisters to engage in a variety of reform activities than were their more conservative brethren. Thus the movement provides for the historian the ability to examine two different theological-cultural approaches to woman's place.

In developing this study, definitions of terms have been especially difficult. This was true for both the Disciple movement and for the various nineteenth century images of woman. Anyone who has studied at length the Disciples of Christ quickly confronts the problem of terminology. For the

sake of consistency, I have used the "Disciples of Christ" to refer to the large religious movement associated with Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and other frontier evangelists in the early nineteenth century, and which is today represented by three different bodies: the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Christian Churches, and the Churches of Christ. Almost all the church's leaders of the nineteenth century employed the term "Disciple," though it must be noted that more conservative churchmen pointedly spelled it with a lower case "d." Although Alexander Campbell and many others have used the phrase "Restoration Movement," I have avoided this term since in their quest for ecumenism the liberal majority of the church rejected Campbell's intent of restoring the polity of first century Christianity. I have also employed the term "Christian Church." This conforms to the nineteenth century vocabulary of Disciple leaders. Although by century's end, the most conservative members of the movement were insisting on "Churches of Christ" as the appropriate name for their fellowship, prior to that time they were less concerned with terminology. For example, David Lipscomb and Elisha Sewell, two of the most dogmatic conservatives, helped found Nashville's Woodland Christian Church, and Sewell served as one of its elders until he broke with the congregation in 1892 to found the Tenth Street Church of Christ. I hope the general reader will forbear this concern with titles. Those familiar with the movement will understand my dilemma.

The nineteenth century image of woman also created semantic problems. I have used three terms throughout this paper to describe certain images held by writers of the last century. The term "true woman" referred to the idealized belief that God and nature intended woman to remain passively in the domestic sphere and there provide a haven for husband and children. "Feminism," which was not a nineteenth century term, is used in this paper to distinguish those women who sought certain basic rights such as voting and ordination because as adults they deserved the same privileges as male members of society. In rejecting the logic of the feminists, the Disciples, and other middle class Americans, employed the terms "woman's rights women" and "strong-minded women." Finally, the "new woman" was a phrase used by the Disciples to refer to a hybrid image of the female sex falling somewhere between the "true woman" and the "feminist." Essentially, the "new woman" desired such rights as suffrage and ordination, but not because she was challenging male domination. Rather the "new woman" sought these rights in order to protect her natural domain, the home.

No historical work can be completed without the kind help of archivists and others who donate their services. I appreciate the generosity shown me at the Harding Graduate School of Religion in Memphis, Tennessee, at the headquarters of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Evanston, Illinois, and at the Indiana Historical Society and the

Indiana State Library and Archives in Indianapolis, Indiana. The library staff at Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee, has been most solicitous of my wants, and I especially thank Virginia Oliver for her patience in allowing me to keep numerous boxes of microfilm set aside for lengthy periods of time. Words of thanks are not adequate to express my gratitude to Roland and Kitty Huff and David McWhirter at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society in Nashville, Tennessee. I greatly value their friendship as well as their assistance in this effort.

I am indebted to Freed-Hardeman College for its part in this project. The administration has provided several study and tuition grants which have made the writing of this dissertation less of a burden on my family.

In addition to the above institutions and individuals, I want to express appreciation to Dr. LeRoy Graf, Dr. Susan Becker, Dr. Ralph Haskins, and Dr. Sam Wallace for reading this manuscript and offering positive suggestions. I especially wish to thank Dr. Charles O. Jackson for not only directing this dissertation, but also for the many enjoyable hours I have spent in his challenging classes. Nancy Bennett, a colleague on the faculty at Freed-Hardeman College, deserves praise for proofing the final draft of this paper.

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CHAPTER I

DISCIPLE IMAGES OF AMERICAN WOMANHOOD

This work is a discussion of woman's changing status in the late nineteenth century as viewed by the Disciples of Christ.¹ From the vantage point of 1900, an American woman looking back on the preceding three and a half decades could list a number of important changes in her sex's social condition. In 1865, most women had few outlets for expression beyond the home and the church. By contrast at century's end, the female sex possessed significant new opportunities in the areas of education, philanthropy, and the professions, and was on the verge of obtaining the franchise. Among the more liberal churches of the United States, including elements within the Disciples of Christ, a few women were even granted clerical privileges.

¹The Disciples of Christ is a broad term referring to the large, indigenous, American religious movement associated with Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and other frontier evangelists around 1800. The movement remained superficially united until shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century. Since then it has divided into three main bodies with an aggregate membership exceeding five million followers: The Disciples of Christ, the Christian Church, and the Churches of Christ. Each has its own historians who have written to justify their positions. The theologically liberal Disciples of Christ are represented by Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker, Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (St. Louis, 1975). This work is intended to replace the older Winfred E. Garrison and Alfred DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, A History (Revised

The country's largest indigenous religious movement with its strength in the Ohio Valley, the upper South, and Texas, the Disciples of Christ, or Christian Church, became a microcosm of the evolution of woman's status in the United States. For the most part members of this church were not among the movers and shakers who agitated for woman's reform, but rather were part of the vast majority of middle-class citizens who had to adjust their thought and theology to woman's changing social status. Spokesmen for the Disciples held a wide variety of opinions as to woman's proper activities in society at large. To a great extent these views were influenced by the theological divisions which occurred within the movement during the period from 1865 to 1900. The church's liberal majority generally welcomed new opportunities for Disciple sisters, while a vocal, and conservative, minority

edition, St. Louis, 1958). The moderate Christian Church's account is presented by James D. Murch, Christians Only: A History of the Restoration Movement (Cincinnati, 1962). Conservative Churches of Christ are discussed by Earl I. West, The Search for the Ancient Order: A History of the Restoration Movement (2 vols. to date, Nashville and Indianapolis, 1950-). David E. Harrell, Jr., A Social History of the Disciples of Christ (2 vols., Nashville and Atlanta, 1966-1973) deviates from the traditional theological interpretations and places the movement within the context of nineteenth century social currents. Several older works are still of value to the student of the Disciple movement: Winfred E. Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier: A History of the Disciples of Christ (New York, 1931); William T. Moore, A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ (New York, 1909); and M. M. Davis, How the Disciples Began and Grew (Cincinnati, 1915).

resisted any effort to move womankind out of the home environment.

Early Disciple theology, developed largely by Alexander Campbell, a Scots-Irish immigrant who settled in western Virginia, contained the strongly masculine traits of a legalistic God who punished man eternally for violating laws laid down in scripture. Since Campbell was appalled by the petty bickering of struggling frontier sects, he called for an end to denominational divisions. His method of accomplishing this goal developed into what he called the "Restoration Plea": an appeal for the unity of all Christians through a reconstruction of the primitive first century church. Using a literal interpretation of the New Testament as their guide, early Disciples focused on a rational acceptance of Jesus as savior, adult immersion, and weekly observance of the Lord's supper. For the most part, they rejected the Calvinistic doctrines of predestination, but retained strong beliefs in moral and theological absolutes. Pre-Civil War Disciples were highly evangelistic. Beginning with no more than a handful of converts in 1809, by 1860 they had about five hundred thousand members, and at century's end they possessed over a million believers. The movement divided into three separate bodies in the twentieth century--the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the conservative Christian Churches, and the Churches of Christ. Taking all three groups together, the Disciples rank today among the

five largest religious movements in America.²

Following the Civil War, and especially after the creation of their Christian Woman's Board of Missions in 1874, the Disciples of Christ underwent a gradual feminization of their theology. The Board was highly successful in raising funds and sending out evangelists. Its achievements and, more importantly, the modest decorum of its leaders led male Disciples to be more open to expanded female participation in church affairs.³ In the century's latter decades, a majority within the Christian Church followed the lead of the major denominations by softening its theology and evolving into a less masculine and more feminine movement.

To a great extent, the schisms within the Disciples of Christ movement can be viewed against the background of the feminization of American religion as a whole in the nineteenth century. Two social historians, Barbara Welter and Ann Douglas, have examined this phenomenon. Welter hypothesizes that as men dedicated themselves to law and economics after the American revolution, they abandoned religion as an

²Sydney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven, 1972), 445-52; Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., ed., Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 1978 (Nashville, 1978), 217-24. The following are the statistical figures for each of the three churches in 1978: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 1,278,734; Christian Churches, 1,040,856; Churches of Christ, 2,500,000 (estimate).

³Lorraine Lollis, The Shape of Adam's Rib: A Lively History of Woman's Work in the Christian Church (St. Louis, 1970), 102.

expendable institution fit for society's weaker members, which in western culture generally meant women. Females became numerically superior within the churches, increasingly handled voluntary societies, taught Sunday school, distributed tracts, and worked for missions. Religion became more feminine--more genteel, less dogmatic, more emotional. This feminization of religion made both men and women aware of female virtues. Thus, in popular culture womanhood and virtue became almost synonymous.⁴

Ann Douglas has demonstrated a close affinity between liberal Victorian clergy in New England and the women who became their patrons. Both groups, she believes, experienced profound changes in status and social role between 1820 and 1875. For the clergy, transfer from established churches to voluntary associations necessitated a shift in function. Prior to the Revolution, ministers, who were reasonably secure in their pulpits, rarely hesitated to condemn sin in their society. However, as the churches became disestablished, preachers found themselves dependent upon congregations which voluntarily assembled for their support. Their message softened and God's masculine qualities of wrath mellowed

⁴Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860," in William L. O'Neill, ed., Insights and Parallels: Problems and Issues of American Social History (Minneapolis, 1973), 306-7. This and other of Welter's essays are reprinted in Barbara Welter, Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century (Athens, Ohio, 1976).

into the more feminine attributes of love and forgiveness. Moreover, the preacher's world became restricted. He relinquished his posture as an active mover of society for the more passive role of influence. His life tended to revolve around weddings, sickrooms, and funerals. This was also the world of women.⁵

Douglas has suggested that along with the ministers, women experienced a change of role after 1820. In an earlier agrarian society, the wife shared with the husband an important economic function. On the colonial farm, her husband and her children literally depended upon her for the food they consumed and the clothes they wore. However as late nineteenth century American society became more complex, the family no longer relied upon mothers for support and came instead to cherish them more for their moral influence.⁶

Sharing the common attribute, "status loss," ministers and women were drawn closer together. The church, like the home, became a feminine preserve where clergymen learned to praise the women upon whose support they depended. Douglas points out that the exaltation of womanly characteristics tended to exile the minister from male society and held within it the danger of women's assuming that their virtues entitled

⁵Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture (New York, 1977), 41-43.

⁶Ibid., 48-50, 74-75.

them to clerical prerogatives. On the other hand, to exalt womanhood ingratiated the minister with the majority of his parishioners.⁷

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, American churches generally de-emphasized the masculine trait of evangelism for the more feminine concept of ecumenism. Freed from theological controversy, ecumenical churches increasingly turned their attention toward the moral problems of this world.⁸ Since women predominated numerically in these bodies, active moral reform involved both the churches and their female patrons. A case in point was the anti-saloon campaign of 1873-74.

In December, 1873, women in Fredonia, New York, and Hillsboro, Ohio, met at local churches, prayed, and then marched to neighborhood saloons demanding the end of liquor sales. Their success inspired other midwestern women to emulate them throughout the spring and summer of 1874. Typically these demonstrations began at the local Methodist, Presbyterian, or Christian Church and ended with earnest wives and mothers praying at the doors of local bars. Protestant ministers encouraged them. Although these protestors departed from accepted feminine decorum, ministers justified

⁷Ibid., 77, 97-98, 115.

⁸Martin E. Marty, Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America (New York, 1970), 188-98.

it on the grounds that these women were engaged in a desperate battle to save their homes. In November, 1874, these anti-liquor campaigners met in Cincinnati, Ohio, and founded the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). With its motto, "For God and Home and Native Land," the WCTU and its supporters closely resembled the Disciple concept of woman's proper social role.⁹

The feminine, ecumenical direction of the dominant American churches failed to satisfy those religiously minded individuals who desired a more virile faith. Ecumenism opened the church door to the entire community and considered only the non-religious as condemned in the sight of God. With its pliable theology, this religious concept possessed the flexibility to adjust to the complex social problems of the late nineteenth century. For more pessimistic Americans who rejected the profound social changes of their age, ecumenism lacked appeal. For them only a strong authoritarian faith could bring order into an increasingly decadent society. These individuals turned to those evangelistic sects which preached a doctrine of strict biblical literalism and played down the softer principles of the Christian religion.¹⁰

The Disciples' "Restoration Appeal" contained both the feminine and masculine elements confronting nineteenth cen-

⁹Helen E. Tyler, Where Prayer and Purpose Meet: The WCTU Story (Evanston, Illinois, 1949), 14-16, 19.

¹⁰Marty, Righteous Empire, 192-93.

ture religious thought. Alexander Campbell's plea possessed two separate components: the desire for unity among all Christians and the attempt to restore the church outlined in the New Testament. After 1865, a conservative minority held stubbornly to the restoration plea. Purposely divorcing themselves from the mainstream of Protestantism, they preached a vigorous gospel that condemned what they considered denominational error. Highly evangelistic, they constantly used verbs which suggested combat with the world and with religious heresy. Given the active, masculine traits of these conservatives, women played only a passive role both in their churches and in their society.¹¹

On the other hand, the liberal majority of the Disciples of Christ gradually moved away from restorationism and toward the quest for Christian unity. This ecumenical stance required the softening of their theology as they sought common ground with the various denominations. Liberals became less concerned with the legalistic recreation of the first century church and emphasized more strongly the rules of love and toleration.¹² In short, their doctrine took on feminine attributes.

¹¹David E. Harrell, Jr., "Peculiar People: A Rationale for Modern Conservative Disciples," in Robert O. Fife, David E. Harrell, Jr., and Robert E. Osborn, eds., Disciples and the Church Universal (Nashville, 1967), 36-38.

¹²Robert E. Osborn, "Witness and Receptivity: The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Body of Christ at Large," ibid., 53-57.

This side of the Disciple schism moved more comfortably within the world of women. With the liberalizing of their theology, they gradually allowed women to play a larger church and social role.

As the Christian Church split into separate evangelistic and ecumenical bodies, it was constantly confronted with the problem of woman's status. Liberals and conservatives debated woman's place in the church, in the home, and in the world. Since the Disciples believed in radical congregational autonomy, and since they lacked a universally accepted national organization, the forum for their debate centered in their periodicals. Looking back on the first century of the movement, one liberal minister recalled that the "editors of magazines and papers . . . exercised nearly as much power as the bishops" of other churches.¹³ Needing only a press and readers to assert their influence, these editors were immensely aware of their power. A publisher of one of the lesser journals urged his readers to pray for the religious press. "The minister can only speak to a few hundred," he declared, but "the newspaper audience is with the thousands."¹⁴

¹³William T. Moore, Comprehensive History, 523.

¹⁴D. T. Wright, "Shall a Newspaper be Prayed For," Christian Pioneer, VIII (June 18, 1868), 300. Hereafter all Disciple periodicals will be abbreviated: CS for Christian Standard, CE for Christian-Evangelist, GA for Gospel Advocate, etc. Consult the "Periodical Abbreviations" table for the titles of the papers.

Among the Disciples' principal editors and their papers were Isaac Errett's Christian Standard (Cincinnati), James H. Garrison's Christian-Evangelist (St. Louis), and David Lipscomb's Gospel Advocate (Nashville). Both Errett and Garrison led the movement along an ecumenical course and both campaigned for greater acceptance of women in church activities. Errett was especially influential in the creation of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions.¹⁵ David Lipscomb stood in sharp contrast to the liberalism of these two men. Sounding the jeremiad, he preached a strong doctrine of social and theological conservatism. He strongly opposed women's leaving the home to enter either politics or the pulpit.¹⁶ Other Disciple papers added to the movement's color. A few were short-lived, some regional in nature, and still others rather specialized in their appeal. The more important weekly journals included the Firm Foundation (Austin, Texas), American Christian Review (Indianapolis), Apostolic Times (Lexington, Kentucky), and the Christian Oracle (Chicago).

Marcia M. Bassett Goodwin, their only female editor, greatly influenced the evolution of woman's status among the Disciples. She published the Christian Monitor, a ladies' monthly magazine, and several related women's papers including

¹⁵Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, 250; McAllister and Tucker, Journey in Faith, 261.

¹⁶Earl I. West, The Life and Times of David Lipscomb (Henderson, Tennessee, 1954), passim.

the American Housewife and the Christian Companion. Almost nothing is known about her background or why she began her papers in Cincinnati in 1863. Three years later she moved to Indianapolis and there she met Elijah Goodwin, another Disciple editor. They soon married.¹⁷ A moderate advocate of more rights for women, Mrs. Goodwin's name appeared on a list of Indianapolis citizens arranging Indiana's first Woman's Suffrage convention in 1869.¹⁸ Although the Christian Monitor and its companion papers ran occasional articles favoring woman's suffrage, for the most part it was a quasi-religious journal featuring short stories, fashion, and articles of current interest to wives and mothers. Generally moderate in tone, her papers were widely accepted by the Disciples. On the front page of the conservative Gospel Advocate, David Lipscomb called the Christian Monitor "a work conducted by earnest and godly women." He added, "we heartily commend it."¹⁹ The editor of the Christian Record praised her paper as a journal "intended to supply the place of that light trashy reading . . . by which the country is

¹⁷James M. Mathes, Life of Elijah Goodwin, the Pioneer Preacher (St. Louis, 1880), 257.

¹⁸Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others, eds., History of Woman Suffrage (6 vols., Rochester, New York, 1889-1922), III, 533.

¹⁹David Lipscomb, "The Christian Monitor," GA, XXIV (February 16, 1882), 99.

flooded."²⁰ A close personal friend of Isaac Errett, she received his frequent encouragement and assistance. In 1866, he informed his subscribers that the "Monitor . . . we are glad to say, is growing in popularity. Mrs. G. deserves great credit for energy and perseverance."²¹ Along with her editorial duties, Marcia Goodwin helped organize and promote the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. In 1883, she was instrumental in creating their newsletter, the Missionary Tidings, but ill health forced her soon to forgo editorial duties with this paper.²²

Although Errett, Garrison, Lipscomb, Mrs. Goodwin, and their fellow publishers differed on numerous theological and social issues, they were in agreement that American society was in dissarray. "We have fallen on evil times;" suggested a writer for the Gospel Advocate, "there is a spirit of unrest abroad in the land; a disposition to insubordination in every position; the servant against the master; the citizen against the government; the wife against the husband; the child

²⁰James M. Mathes, "Editor's Table," CR, n.s., II (January, 1868), 30.

²¹Isaac Errett, "The Christian Monitor," CS, I (April 14, 1866), 13.

²²Extracts from the Christian Woman's Board of Missions Executive Committee Meetings [typescripts], October 22, 1874, February 1, May 1, May 15, August 25, 1883, Christian Woman's Board of Missions Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee. Unfortunately the original records of the CWBM prior to 1919 have been lost.

against the parent."²³ As the Disciples sought to bring order out of social chaos, they frequently turned to woman as the guardian of traditional values.

Christian Church ministers surveyed their congregations, and noted the numerical superiority of woman in the church.²⁴ Given the association of woman with moral virtue, these clergymen assumed that the female sex possessed the key to society's salvation. With that thought in mind, Charles L. Loos, a prominent Disciple educator, declared in 1888 that "our hope for victory in the cause of right, justice and purity . . . lies--always with God--[assisted by] woman's powerful cooperation."²⁵ The Disciples of Christ never questioned whether woman would contribute to the moral leavening of society, but rather debated in what capacity she should do this. In their dialogue over woman's proper social role,

²³L. A., "Woman's Work in the Church," GA, XXVIII (June 9, 1886), 355.

²⁴Clark Braden, "Woman's Sphere and Work According to the Bible," ACR, XXIX (November 18, 1886), 369-70; Martha Williams, "Women's Mission," C, XIII (June 10, 1875), 2; Annie R. Dobyns, "The Night Is Far Spent the Day Is at Hand," ibid., XVIII (October 7, 1880), 2; A. P. Cobb, "Woman's Work in the Primitive Church," CE, XX (December 6, 1883), 5; Catharine F. Lindsay, "Let Our Sisters Help to Prepare the Way of the Lord," ibid., XXXI (February 15, 1894), 110; E. L. Frazier, "Woman and Her Mission," CM, XI (October, 1872), 441-46; M. P. Hayden, "Woman's Work," in W. L. Hayden, ed., Church Polity (Chicago, 1894), 73.

²⁵Charles L. Loos, "Woman's Place and Power," CS, XXIII (May 12, 1888), 285.

church leaders tended to look upon females in terms of three basic stereotypes: "the cult of true womanhood," the image of the feminist, and, by the 1890's, the development of the "new woman."

Among the Disciples of Christ, the "cult of true womanhood" dominated their perception of woman's status in society. This concept grew out of the social ferment of early nineteenth century America and reached its greatest level of acceptance in the decades following the Civil War. As men engaged in the process of nation and economy building, they abandoned the tradition-maintaining institutions of the home and the church to women. Men became the doers, the builders, and, all too often, the destroyers, and women were supposed to preserve, to uplift, and to heal. Woman's universe was encompassed by the home, the church, and her children. Religious literature, ladies' magazines, and popular gift books combined to assure woman that when properly submissive to her father, her husband, or her clergyman, her influence could transcend society and help to create a better world. By remaining passively in her domestic sphere and there pleasing her spouse and training her children, woman preserved the moral virtues of society. The essential elements of the cult of true womanhood emphasized the female sex's status in terms of purity, piety, domesticity, and submissiveness.²⁶

²⁶Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-

In common with other middle class Americans, the Disciples of Christ looked upon their wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters in terms of true womanhood. Prior to 1874, members of this religious communion saw woman's only avenue of expression as the home, and to a limited extent, the church. However, with the creation that year of their Christian Woman's Board of Missions and also the organization of the interdenominational Woman's Christian Temperance Union, their interpretation of woman's proper social role began a gradual evolution which eventually allowed women to advocate moderate social reform, to preach, to receive some educational opportunities, and to vote. Nonetheless, a survey of Disciple periodicals from 1865 to 1875 revealed an almost universal acceptance of a more limited social role for Christian Church women. Prior to 1875, the Disciples envisioned woman as preserving traditional values within the limited confines of the home and the church.

In the decade prior to the creation of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Disciples repeatedly emphasized the theme of woman's passive influence. "The great want of the church in these unholy times," wrote a Kentucky Disciple, "is true genuine Christian women . . . who cultivate their minds and train their children in the 'fear and admonition of the

1860," American Quarterly, XVIII (Summer, 1966), 151-54.

Lord."²⁷ A contributor to the Apostolic Times assured his readers that through woman's "genial influence the hearts of husband, child, and neighbor are won from the ways of sin."²⁸ In a letter to the Christian Standard, a Disciple, identified only as "H.," emphasized that the "welfare and best interest of society depends greatly on female influence." However, this was not to be accomplished through the active career of soldier, politician, or priest or through "unsexing herself by transcending her sphere" in any way. "Beside the cradle, in the nursery, at the fireside," he affirmed, "woman may gain victories for God, and man, and virtue, and liberty."²⁹

Disciple authors joined the chorus of middle class society in harmonizing upon the sentimental motherhood theme. "B. N. M." revealed in Lard's Quarterly that with the sight of a woman's grave "a sigh involuntarily escapes me." The final resting place of a female always awakened within him memories of that love which could "only be associated with the holy name 'Mother.'"³⁰ E. Katie Frazer reminded Christian Monitor subscribers that although her sex could not sit in the president's

²⁷Passim, "Female Influence," AT, V (December 25, 1873), 6.

²⁸W. F. P., "The True Woman," ibid. (May 8, 1873), 2.

²⁹H., "Woman and the Gospel," CS, III (June 6, 1868), 129.

³⁰B. N. M., "Woman," LQ, V (January, 1868), 111.

chair or explain the mysteries of science, every "statesman, philosopher or preacher, was once a helpless child."³¹ Most Disciples agreed with the dictum of Mrs. Frances Elliott who wrote for Marcia Goodwin's papers. "To the great mass of womankind," she proclaimed, God "has indicated as if He had thundered it from Mt. Sinai, 'Your children are your central point. . . . Your glory is your Motherhood.'"³²

Disciples reminded mothers that their sphere was the home. The Gospel Advocate editorialized to women readers that "Your duty is not out in the world; it is at home in the bosom of your own families."³³ Mrs. Silence Benton questioned those who advocated any non-domestic role for women. "Christian mothers of the nineteenth century, is this so? If it is, then the God of this universe has committed himself to a mistake."³⁴ Isaac Errett echoed this theme. "I believe in the old fashioned theory, that a woman's best 'sphere' is at home. . . . Christ had no lovelier name for heaven, than 'My Father's house.'"³⁵

³¹E. Katie Frazer, "What Manner of Women Ought We to Be," CM, X (July, 1871), 294.

³²Frances D. Elliott, "What Can Woman Do in Domestic Life," ibid. (March, 1871), 125.

³³"Suggestions to Christian Mothers," GA, XI (September 30, 1869), 99.

³⁴Silence H. Benton, "Encouragement for Housekeepers," AH, II (January, 1870), 2.

³⁵Isaac Errett, "Friendly Talk with the Girls," CS, VII (April 27, 1872), 131.

The popular assumptions of each sex's physical and psychological abilities helped to justify images active for men and passive for women. W. T. Taylor, a Kentucky physician, assigned both sexes to their respective places after studying "the comparative anatomy of their mental powers." Since the "judicial faculties" dominated man and sensitivity excels in woman, "man reasons, woman feels; he generalizes, she analyzes; he discovers, she observes."³⁶ Likewise, Dr. J. H. Hanaford, a prolific contributor to the Christian Monitor, assured his readers that by physical law, man "must be the leader" and woman must be "the teacher, moulding the mind and the soul." To this Disciple, man "must be the personification of power and of will," woman must partake of "kindness, sympathy, love . . . and finer feelings."³⁷

The Disciples believed that woman's superior attributes of kindness and sympathy also made her more religious. An aging evangelist called woman "the pious sex." To him, women were "more religious by nature than men," and thus "with the milk of the maternal breast," she instilled piety into her children.³⁸ In 1872, another minister sermonized

³⁶W. T. Taylor, "Woman's Vocation," AT, III (October 19, 1871), 217.

³⁷J. H. Hanaford, "Man and Woman," Christian Monitor reprinted in GA, XVI (April 30, 1874), 420. The copy of the Christian Monitor where the article originally appeared is no longer extant.

³⁸Jacob Creath, "'The Fair Sex,'" CP, VI (February, 1866), 56.

upon this same theme. "Number your audience on a rainy day, and you will learn that stout men have excused themselves on account of the inclemency of the weather, while frail women . . . have faithfully met the Lord at his house."³⁹

Disciples also assumed that woman was by nature submissive. Mrs. Goodwin asserted that "God has so made the sexes that women, like children, cling to men: lean upon them as though they were superior in mind and body."⁴⁰

Sister Anne, a contributor to the Apostolic Times, insisted that God placed woman "by the side, under the protection of man."⁴¹ This doctrine held that the father headed the home and established its rules. Although they valued the wife's opinions, most Disciples agreed with the evangelist who proclaimed that "when differences of opinion arise . . . it is the duty of the mother to yield."⁴²

Between 1865 and 1875, this religious fellowship almost universally subscribed to the true womanhood image. In their proper sphere women were to be mothers, who used their special influence to uplift society and to train their children.

³⁹E. L. Frazier, "Woman and Her Mission," CM, XI (October, 1872), 444.

⁴⁰"Men Who Win Women," AH, II (October, 1870), 150.

⁴¹Sister Anne, "Inequality of Man--Male and Female," AT, V (March 19, 1874), 6.

⁴²William Rowzee, "Home Culture," ibid., VIII (January 27, 1876), 38.

Without the franchise, women found fulfillment through their domestic duties and through their religious piety. Although females did not desire to rule, they raised their sons to participate in the active careers of politics and preaching. To the woman who wanted the vote, a writer for the Christian Monitor declared that "she will exercise the right of suffrage through her sons." To those women who desired to preach, he affirmed that through the "well-trained boy she will tell the story of love."⁴³ The Disciples were in agreement with the minister who declared in the Apostolic Times that the "true woman is the heart of the family, of the church, and of society."⁴⁴

The creation of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions in 1874 and the development of other, non-Disciple, women's organizations provided for Christian Church women opportunities to move beyond the confines of the home and into the realms of social and religious reform. Nonetheless, the Disciples continued to employ the rhetoric of true womanhood until century's end. In 1886, a conservative Disciple sister suggested in the Firm Foundation that to "every true woman home is a priceless kingdom, her husband an honored king, and her children loved and loving subjects."⁴⁵ Even

⁴³J. C. Stark, "Woman's Mission," LCM, VII (January, 1868), 2.

⁴⁴W. F. P., "The True Woman," 2.

⁴⁵Sarai, "Talks with the Sisters," FF, III (October, 1886), 5.

as late as 1894, M. P. Hayden, a prominent liberal minister, presented an almost perfect summary of the philosophy of "true womanhood:"

The relation of the sexes presents to us this picture of woman: That woman is physically inferior to man, intellectually his equal, socially his superior, morally more susceptible, and religiously more devotional; and while she is man's companion and equal, in point of authority she is subordinate to him. Her place in society and her sphere of activity should be in harmony with the qualities and peculiarities of her nature, and her work and responsibilities should be such as she is best fitted to fulfill within her proper position and relations. This indicates that her place and sphere are to be found in domestic and social life.⁴⁶

In spite of this reverence for "true womanhood," by the 1890's the Disciples had modified their view of woman's proper function in society. Hayden's reference to woman's prerogatives in "social life" carried with it the belief that woman could engage in those types of reform consistent with her nature and her interests.

Nineteenth century feminism, which for the Disciples was not an approved realm of social reform for their sisters, had its beginnings at the Women's Rights Convention of Seneca Falls, New York, in July, 1848. These resolute conventioners adopted a "Declaration of Sentiments" that expressed the basic premise of feminism by proclaiming: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal." This goal was further emphasized in a

⁴⁶M. P. Hayden, "Woman's Work," 75.

series of resolutions, one of which declared that "woman is man's equal--was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such." There followed a series of proposals constituting fundamental "women's rights." Among them were the right to speak in public assemblies, the right to preach the gospel, the right to the elective franchise, the right to engage in reform, the right to gain an adequate education, and the right to secure "equal participation with men in the various trades, professions, and commerce."⁴⁷ The participants of the Seneca Falls convention assumed that the gaining of certain enumerated "rights" would lead to the acceptance of sexual equality. However, by century's end, many middle class Americans were responding with favor to the idea of woman's rights and at the same time rejecting the feminist appeals of equality.

Liberal Disciples eventually accepted the goals of "woman's rights"--suffrage, woman's ordination, improved educational opportunities, approved reform and philanthropic activities--but at the same time they rejected the concept that males and females should be equal either in the home or in society at large. Their terminology, however, was confusing. All Disciples employed the term "woman's rights" as an epithet to condemn dedicated feminists who advocated

⁴⁷Stanton, Woman Suffrage, I, 70-73.

sexual equality in society. The association of woman's rights with the free love theories of Victoria Woodhull and the anti-clericalism of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, led writers for Christian Church papers to fear that the movement would destroy both the home and the church.⁴⁸ Isaac Errett railed against "the doctrine of 'Woman's Rights'" which promised to drag mothers from their homes. Calling these women "justly . . . regarded fanatics," he equated their oratory with "profanity from the mouth of a suckling."⁴⁹ David Lipscomb assured the readers of the Gospel Advocate that wherever woman entered the public arena the result was "loose marriage, easy divorce, indisposition to bear children, and . . . attendant social impurity."⁵⁰ In the same spirit, James H. Garrison attacked Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Woman's Bible as "a tendency of certain champions of woman's cause to array the two sexes against each other."⁵¹ Lesser known Disciples shared in this critique of feminism. Writing for the Christian Standard in 1888, one minister castigated "the

⁴⁸Linda Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America (New York, 1974), 96-97.

⁴⁹Isaac Errett, "Something About Women's Work," CS, I (October 13, 1866), 217.

⁵⁰David Lipscomb, "Woman and Her Work," GA, XXXIV (October 13, 1892), 644.

⁵¹James H. Garrison, "An Abnormal Emphasis of Sex," CE, XXXII (September 5, 1895), 562.

women who [were] loudest in their cry for . . . woman's rights" because they were "neglecting their homes and the training of their children." To him, "there [could] be no homes where true womanhood [was] wanting."⁵² A decade before, "Sister Carr" scolded the woman "who would waste her God-given powers in advocating either theoretically or practically the doctrine of woman's rights" which was, in her mind, an insult "to the wisdom of God," and a rejection of "the heavenly light that beautifies . . . womanhood."⁵³ Christian Church spokesmen sympathized with James A. Garfield, a Disciple minister, congressman, and future President, who after counseling with a troubled friend recorded in his diary: "The Woman's Rights Doctrines have broken up the peace of his family."⁵⁴

Since the Disciples equated "woman's rights" with the disapproved concepts of feminism, they had to develop other terminology to describe those females whose desires were acceptable to the church's majority: the privilege of voting, preaching, and engaging in social reform. In the 1890's, the

⁵²H. M. Morrison, "Child Training," CS, XXIII (June 9, 1888), 351.

⁵³Sister Carr, "Christian Woman's Responsibilities in the Religious Education of the Young," AT, VIII (June 8, 1876), 363.

⁵⁴James A. Garfield Diary, May 7, 1873, in Harry J. Brown and Frederick D. Williams, eds., The Diary of James A. Garfield (2 vols., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967), II, 176.

term "new woman" emerged in their periodicals to fulfill this need. While the cult of "true womanhood" emphasized woman's passive influence within the spheres of the home and the church, at century's end the Disciples and others of the middle class envisioned the "new woman" as being more active and exercising a positive influence for social change. Essentially the "new woman" was an extension of the image of "true womanhood." The Disciples shared with many other middle class Americans the belief that greater education and more social and political privileges for women would make them better wives and mothers.⁵⁵

Ecumenical ministers were more enthusiastic about the "new woman" than their evangelistic brethren. Church liberals rejoiced that the young woman of the 1890's had greater opportunities for an education than her sisters of the past generations, they assumed that she would engage in social reform and philanthropy, and they looked to her eventually exercising the vote. Yet at the same time, supporters of the "new woman" argued that she would remain loyal to her

⁵⁵Nancy F. Cott has observed that late nineteenth century "women's club activities and social reform endeavors grew out of, rather than in direct opposition to, the cult of true womanhood. . . . Interest in [female reform activities] was consciously seen and justified as an extension of woman's traditional role as moral and physical nurturer." Nancy F. Cott, "Introduction," Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women (New York, 1972), 26. For other references to the conservative nature of woman's reform ideology in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, see Aileen S. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman's Suf-

proper sphere--the home. On the other hand, conservatives associated her with the advocates of "woman's rights," and continued at century's end to exalt the passive virtues of those "true women" who remained contented in their homes. Both ecumenical and evangelistic Disciples envisioned woman's status as rising out of her domestic functions.

Conservative Disciples rejected the "new woman" as a dangerous social trend which would remove wives and mothers from their intended sphere. In 1897, David Lipscomb's paper editorialized that conservatives considered the "new woman" an "innovation boding no good to society." The Gospel Advocate criticized such women for antagonizing man for becoming "a usurper of his prerogatives." It condemned any civilization which led "woman to disregard home, home duties, and family responsibilities." The paper gravely added that the "new woman" was "not the kind which our country should desire." The editorial concluded with the prayer that "mothers who appreciated their responsibilities and keenly perceived the true sphere of womanly effort will be slow to train their daughters up for the new woman's sphere."⁵⁶

T. R. Burnett, a regular columnist for the Gospel

frage Movement, 1890-1920 (New York, 1965), xi; David J. Pivar, Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900 (Westport, Connecticut, 1973), 257-58; Alan P. Grimes, The Puritan Ethic and Woman Suffrage (New York, 1967), passim.

⁵⁶"The New Woman," GA, XXXIX (July 15, 1897), 446.

Advocate, expressed similar misgivings. In 1890, he used this concept to attack his ecumenical brethren's concessions to the sisters: "Brother Jones says that the 'new woman' will call for a new man and a new church and a new preacher, and why not for a new gospel and a new Savior?" To Burnett, the acceptance by liberal clergymen of the "new woman" was simply another digression from the principles of New Testament Christianity. Six years later, this columnist linked the "new woman" with his negative opinion toward feminism: "One of the 'new women,' in instructing another aspiring sister how to address an audience, told her to 'speak like she was scolding her husband.' Some people think that most of these oratorical women are husband scolders--that is, that portion of them that have been so fortunate (or unfortunate) as to capture husbands."⁵⁷ Writing along these same lines, a conservative sister suggested in the Christian Standard that the malcontented "new woman" would fail in her clamoring for more rights. By contrast, "pretty brides--God bless them--[would be] so busy and so happy with their babies, those wonderful babies . . . that they would find neither time nor inclination to discuss their rights."⁵⁸

⁵⁷T. R. Burnett, "Burnett's Budget," GA, XXXII (June 18, 1890), 386; ibid., XXXVIII (July 9, 1896), 435.

⁵⁸Anna D. Bradley, "The Present Woman," CS, XXXI (November 30, 1895), 1146.

Two of the most vocal proponents of the "new woman," Jessie H. Brown and Ella M. Huffman, were influential members of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. As early as 1888, Jessie Brown indicated that women were to play an active role as social reformers. "The time has gone by," she proclaimed, "when the world can accept, as its ideal of Christian womanhood, the picture of a gray-garbed nun, shut in from the great thoroughfares of human life by convent walls."⁵⁹ Five years later, she used the term "new womanhood" to describe this more vigorous role for the female sex. Not suprisingly she praised the "philanthropic movements of the new womanhood" which included not only the CWBM, but also the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Red Cross, and the King's Daughters.⁶⁰ Brown saw the origins of the "new womanhood" as arising out of woman's entrance into colleges throughout the land, and she delighted in "this broadening of woman's intellectual advantages." Nonetheless, she carefully pointed out that this "new woman" remained loyal to the home. Noting statistics indicated "that the educated woman [had] firmer health and more endurance than the uneducated woman," Brown suggested that

⁵⁹Jessie H. Brown, "Christian Womanhood," CS, XXIII (October 20, 1888), 663.

⁶⁰Jessie H. Brown, "Woman in Philanthropy," ibid., XXIX (June 17, 1893), 474.

she would know "how to care for herself and her family, and . . . [be a] better home-maker" than her less well trained sisters.⁶¹

Ella M. Huffman also praised the "new womanhood." She observed that the "whole world [was] talking of the new womanhood--the higher womanhood," which she compared to "God's ideal of womanhood." Like Jessie Brown, she assumed that woman's enhanced status resulted from increased educational opportunities, and from the efforts of such organizations as the CWBM to make woman aware of her ability to bring about reform. Still Huffman believed that in woman's "higher conquest," she would remain true to her basic nature. The "new womanhood" would seek out the traditional roles of wife and mother.⁶²

Ironically, the best Disciple analysis of the "new woman" appeared in the Gospel Advocate. From July, 1896, to April, 1897, Mrs. T. P. [Selina] Holman, a Fayetteville, Tennessee, housewife and an active member of the state's Woman's Christian Temperance Union, praised the "new woman" as a positive model for her sex. For years, she had been a frequent critic of what she considered David Lipscomb's patronizing attitudes toward women. In the past they had clashed over such subjects

⁶¹Jessie H. Brown, "The New Womanhood," ibid. (May 6, 1893), 354.

⁶²Ella M. Huffman, "The Higher Conquest," CO, X (October 26, November 2, November 9, 1893), 675, 692, 708.

as the proper duties of mothers, female suffrage, and even woman's right to preach. In December, 1895, the Gospel Advocate reprinted from a non-Disciple periodical an attack upon the "new woman," accusing her of deserting the home and motherhood.⁶³ Mrs. Holman mulled over this article for six months before writing her reply.

She began her analysis of the "new woman" by separating this image from the concept of "woman's rights," which she believed was in opposition to "wifhood and motherhood." If "woman's rights" was the same as the "new woman", then she proclaimed that "no calamity that could affect God's green earth could be so great or so destructive to the human race." Nonetheless, Mrs. Holman noted that she knew many young girls who fitted her image of the "new woman" and who "would indignantly deny that they were 'woman's rights women' even in a small degree." In common with Jessie Brown and Ella Huffman, this Disciple sister saw the "new woman" as developing out of better educational advantages and she hoped that the "new woman" would use her "womanliness," her "purity," and her "goodness" for the betterment of society. But above all, Mrs. Holman believed "that when the 'new woman' [came] into her kingdom, wide-awake, alert, thoughtful, up to date, she

⁶³"The New Woman and the Old Man," Pacific Christian, reprinted in the GA, XXVII (December 5, 1895), 770. Throughout this paper, a woman's name will appear as she most frequently signed it. For example, "Selina Holman" will always appear as "Mrs. T. P. Holman," and "Selina Campbell" will always appear as "Mrs. Alexander Campbell."

will not depreciate, but [rather] magnify and glorify the profession of motherhood."⁶⁴ Despite this moderate interpretation of the "new woman," David Lipscomb sadly replied: "It gives a body the blues to read Sister Holman's article."⁶⁵

The Disciple's first female minister exemplified their concept of the "new woman." In 1888, Clara Babcock (1854-1924) began preaching for several small Illinois congregations without calling attention to herself. Not until 1892 did she report her activities by writing in the Christian Standard. In January and again in June, she revealed that her congregations had experienced significant growth. In just four years, she had personally baptized 300 candidates. With pride she noted that she had immersed adults in winter's icy weather and in summer's oppressive heat. Although she felt this proved woman could equal man's physical ability, Babcock did not argue for the acceptance of the sexes as equals in society. She believed her sex's unique characteristics gave woman the right to preach. "For centuries," she affirmed, "woman with her magnetic influence, her tender pleadings, as well as her great intuitive powers," had been denied the

⁶⁴Mrs. T. P. Holman, "The 'New Woman,'" ibid., XXVIII (July 9, 1896), 438; Mrs. T. P. Holman, "The New Woman, No. 2," ibid. (July 16, 1896), 452-53; Mrs. T. P. Holman, "Reply to Brother Lipscomb's Strictures on the Earlier Education of Women," ibid. (August 6, 1896), 511; Mrs. T. P. Holman, "Wanted--Mothers," ibid., XXIX (April 1, 1897), 198.

⁶⁵David Lipscomb, untitled reply to Holman, "The 'New Woman,'" 438.

"rostrum and pulpit." Babcock perceived her ministry as complementary to woman's customary roles. Proudly pointing out that she had given birth to six children, she stated that she possessed a "happy home [where] each member [was] willing to sacrifice some . . . for the salvation of souls and the glory of God." Continuing her preaching until a few weeks before her death, she eventually baptized over 1500 converts.⁶⁶

Writing at century's end, another female Disciple gave thanks for the "new woman." In the Missionary Tidings, Mrs. Sarah Stotts looked back on the nineteenth century and proclaimed that woman had "discovered herself," and had found tremendous "fields of knowledge and usefulness [opened] up before her." To her, woman's enhanced status developed after the creation of both the Christian Woman's Board of Missions and the Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1874. Both organizations gained greater respect for womankind. To those who would criticize the WCTU, Mrs. Stotts replied that it only represented "the 'crystallized motherlove' that

⁶⁶Clara C. Babcock, "From the Field," CS, XXVIII (January 2, 1892), 21; Clara C. Babcock, "Woman in the Pulpit," ibid. (June 4, 1892), 482; Ernest R. Babcock, "Babcock," ibid., LX (July 25, 1925), 1045; B. H. Cleaver, "Mrs. C. C. Babcock," CE, LXII (December 31, 1925), 1703; In 1978, the National Council of Churches reported that the Disciples of Christ had 388 ordained women ministers. This was only slightly fewer than the 400 associated with the United Church of Christ. Jacquet, Yearbook of Churches, 260.

would protect their loved ones from every form of wrong."⁶⁷ "Crystallized motherlove" symbolized the active "new woman." Middle class Americans found the status change from the passive "true woman" to the active "new woman" more palatable when assured that her sphere had been extended, not radically altered.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the main body of the Disciples of Christ adjusted its theology to suit its concept of woman's changing status. A stubborn minority, however, held firmly to the static perception of woman's traditional role. As might be expected in a religious movement, their most intense debate centered around female participation in church affairs. The ideological struggle over sisters' speaking in worship services separated the Disciples into those who favored and those who opposed the "new woman."

⁶⁷Sarah Stotts, "What Shall be the Attitude of Christian Women toward These Two Great Religious Movements?" MT, XIV (February, 1897), 273.

CHAPTER II

"SHALL THE SISTERS SPEAK?" THE DISCIPLE RATIONALE

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Disciples of Christ continually debated the extent to which women could participate in church affairs. Since this question encompassed theological as well as cultural issues, it received wide attention in their periodicals. Efforts to define the role of females in worship services and particularly the debate over women's ordination added to the developing schism between liberals and conservatives. "Like the irrepressible ghost of Banquo," wrote an associate editor of the Christian-Evangelist, "the question [of woman's church role] will not down at the bidding of theologians, Bible college professors, or even editors."¹ In 1886, the American Christian Review observed that for years this topic had appeared in its columns as "often as once a month, if not more frequently."² And as late as 1894, David Lipscomb, the conservative editor of the Gospel Advocate, complained that his office had recently received "not less than twenty queries on the question of women preaching in public." These he

¹B. W. Johnson, "Women in the Worship," CE, XX (June 28, 1883), 2.

²W. B. F. Treat, "Woman's Sphere and Work According to the Bible," ACR, XXIX (November 11, 1886), 364.

declined to answer since he had only recently discussed the subject.³ Whatever the social or theological temper of individual Disciples, the role of woman in the church almost always aroused strong emotions.

In her essay on the feminization of American worship, Barbara Welter has suggested that while religion was not directly tied to woman's changing status in society, the evolving nature of nineteenth century Protestantism "may have had more effect on the basic problems posed by women than anything which happened within the women's organizations."⁴ In the case of the Disciples, their theology established the boundaries within which their women adjusted to late Victorian culture. As the Christian Church divided into ecumenical and evangelistic bodies, their ideological concepts of woman's position in society diverged as well. Although they both rejected feminist appeals for sexual equality, by the 1890's liberal Disciples accepted and even welcomed the more active "new woman." Their conservative brethren continued to interpret the Bible in light of the cult of true womanhood.

³David Lipscomb, "Women as Public Preachers," GA, XXXVI (June 28, 1894), 398.

⁴Welter, "Feminization of American Religion," 306. This chapter is not intended to evaluate the validity of the theological arguments either for or against women in the ministry. Both ecumenical and evangelistic Disciples held to their beliefs with equal fervor. The question for consideration here is what were the essential ideological premises which led some Disciples to accept and others reject female preachers.

Isaac Errett and David Lipscomb articulated the liberal and conservative views of woman's church role.

Until his death in 1888, Isaac Errett was probably the most prominent advocate of greater female participation in church polity. Although he fell short of supporting woman's ordination, he helped create the Christian Woman's Board of Missions and his paper, the Christian Standard, opened wide its pages to those who favored female ministers. In 1878, he wrote to Marcia Goodwin praising the positive "change in public sentiment as to the work of Christian women." Within the church, this had resulted in part from women's contribution to Sunday school programs. But he added, "the general growth of public sentiment outside of the church as to woman's rights and capabilities, has done much more" to encourage women to engage in religious activities. Errett assured Mrs. Goodwin, however, that "among us it has led to a healthy development of womanly activities in quiet and unostentatious ways."⁵

David Lipscomb, a Disciple Jeremiah, considered woman's expanding influence in the church a sign of society's moral decline. He especially condemned female ministers whom he viewed as products not only of northern theological liberalism, but also of social toleration leading to the destruction

⁵Isaac Errett, "Woman's Work in the Church," CM, XVII (February, 1878), 61.

of the family. "The habit of women preaching," he wrote in 1891, "originated in the same [northern] hot bed with easy divorce, free love, and the repugnance to child bearing." For the editor of the Gospel Advocate, a female behind the pulpit repudiated her role as a true woman.⁶

Whether Disciples favored Errett's "quiet and unostentatious" new woman or preferred Lipscomb's idealized true woman, they were united in their opposition to the feminist campaign for sexual equality. Although both liberal and conservatives condemned feminism, conservatives tended to associate woman's ordination with female suffrage, women lecturing to mixed audiences, and other "rights" that they found undesirable. John W. McGarvey, one of their more scholarly theologians, saw a close relationship between the woman's suffrage campaign and the issue of sisters speaking in the churches. In 1883, he explained that the opportunities afforded to American woman were "unparalleled in the history of the world" and such latitude was "giving rise to questions . . . never agitated in other countries." Only in the United States could the concept "of extending the suffrage to woman be raised, and in no other country [were] the churches troubled with the question whether woman

⁶David Lipscomb, "Should Women Preach Publicly?" GA, XXXIII (August 5, 1891), 486. For similar statements, see David Lipscomb, "Woman and Her Work," ibid., XXIV (October 13, 1892), 644; Lipscomb, "Women as Public Preachers," 399.

should be called to the ministry." McGarvey was utterly opposed to women preaching. "So far as the primitive church was concerned," he declared, the question of sisters' speaking "was settled definitely and finally. . . . Now, in the end of ages, we encounter it again, and again it will be settled, whether in the original way or not remains to be seen."⁷ Writing in the same manner, Moses Lard, a respected church leader, dismissed woman's speaking as an issue promoted by "female agitators [with] idle hands."⁸

As might be expected, conservatives were the more vehement in their castigation of feminism. Few could match the intense condemnation by A. P. Terrell, an evangelistic Disciple, in the Christian Quarterly Review for July, 1889. "For Bible reasons," he thundered, "I abominate the whole modern heresy of 'Woman's Rights.' . . . A female politician makes my flesh crawl. 'Woman's Suffrage' is nauseating. Even to think of a woman in the pulpit, or on the lecture rostrum, is disagreeable." In Terrell's mind, "the plain meaning of God's word is against the whole thing."⁹ More gentle among conservative spokesmen was William C. Trimble

⁷John W. McGarvey, "Shall Women Speak in the Church?" CE, XX (April 5, 1883), 3.

⁸Moses Lard, "Should Woman Speak in the Church," AT, VI (April 9, 1874), 1.

⁹A. P. Terrell, "Should the Sisters Pray and Speak in Public?" CQR, VIII (July, 1889), 335.

who closed his negative discussion of female preaching with the observation: "not all the women, that are prominent as speakers and teachers of Woman's Rights, can boast as fair a name and character as the multitude that keep silent in the churches."¹⁰

Even the strongest advocates of woman's ordination in the Christian Church sought to avoid an association with those women who fervently sought the goal of male-female equality. One Disciple sister, who desired to preach, rhetorically inquired, "why should all women in every age be treated as if they were a crowd of authoritative, clamorous, and intolerable 'woman's rights women.'"¹¹ In a Christian-Evangelist editorial, James H. Garrison praised "the normal and healthy progress in recognition of woman's" church role. But he condemned as "unnatural and unhealthy" the "tendency of certain champions of woman's cause" to pit the sexes against one another."¹² After hearing the Reverend Anna Shaw deliver a temperance lecture in 1892, a Kansas City Disciple noted that in the audience there was "an absence of the short-haired bloomer type of women reformer." He affirmed with

¹⁰William C. Trimble, "Trimble on the Woman's Pastor," ACR, XXIII (February 24, 1880), 58.

¹¹S. O., "Speak, Woman, Speak!" AT, V (February 5, 1874), 6.

¹²James H. Garrison, "An Abnormal Emphasis on Sex," CE, XXXII (September 5, 1895), 562. In this editorial Garrison was attacking the recently published Woman's Bible.

conviction that for too long the "semi-masculine" woman had delayed the sex's progress in the home, the church, and the state.¹³ For these liberal Disciples, woman's progress was accompanied by a modest demeanor.

Although most Christian Church spokesmen disapproved of the feminist appeal for woman's rights, the Disciples shared with other churches in the rapid feminization of its theology. Appalled by this softening trend in their church, conservatives condemned repeatedly their ecumenical brethren for catering to the sisters. Austin McGary, the caustic publisher of the Firm Foundation, railed against such ministers and their female supporters. "The way our [liberal] brethren are pushing women to the front," he declared, "we need not be much suprised to soon see [the sisters] pastoring in 'plug-hats and claw-hammer coats'; and playing the theological dude generally." He added gravely, "Fast preachers and fast women in the church travel fast toward Babylon."¹⁴

Some liberals recognized the dilemma of appealing to men with a religion that was increasingly feminine, but could not reverse the trend. In 1887, Garrison concluded that more women attend church than men because "our preaching is womanly rather than manly." Since modern sermons tended "to exalt

¹³W. O. Thomas, "Inter-State Woman's Conference," CS, XXVIII (March 12, 1892), 234.

¹⁴Austin McGary, "From Bro. M'Gavock," FF, IV (August 15, 1888), 5.

the passive rather than the active elements of character," he believed ministers needed to infuse more "masculinity and strength" into their discourses. Nonetheless, this editor appreciated those special attributes of Christ's teachings which appealed to woman's more pious nature. Like the man of sorrows, woman possessed tremendous sympathy and mourned deeply the loss of loved ones. To make women hostile to the gospel, Garrison philosophized, "just unsex them, take the instinct of womanhood and motherhood out of their hearts and save them from the sorrows which these entail, and you accomplish your end."¹⁵ Despite a latent desire for a more virile religion, this Disciple spokesman recognized the increasing influence of women in his church and catered to it.

Liberals and conservatives developed a complicated rationale justifying their positions on woman's church role. Although both sides quoted extensively from the Bible and both disputed the intent of certain key passages, their ideology tended to revolve around their personal view of

¹⁵James H. Garrison, "Why Is It?" *CE*, XXIV (August 4, 1887), 480-81. Not infrequently Disciple liberals commented on the numerical dominance of women in their church. Martha Williams, "Woman's Mission," *C*, XIII (June 10, 1875), 2; Annie R. Dobyns, "The Night is Far Spent the Day Is at Hand," *ibid.*, XVIII (October 7, 1880), 2; Sarah Franklin, "Women Praying in Public," *CE*, XX (November 22, 1883), 6-7; A. P. Cobb, "Woman's Work in the Primitive Church," *ibid.* (December 6, 1883), 5; Catharine F. Lindsay, "Let Our Sisters Help to Prepare the Way of the Lord," *ibid.*, XXXI (February 15, 1894), 110.

woman's status in society. The movement to secure a larger church role for Disciple sisters was a conscious assault on the social and theological ideas long held by church members. For the most part, the liberal arguments developed in response to the ideology of their more conservative brethren. To these latter Disciples, inspired scripture explicitly mandated the cult of true womanhood.

The conservative theological position was anchored on two passages written by the Apostle Paul to the first century church at Corinth and to the evangelist Timothy:

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. (I Corinthians 14:34, 35)

Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived in the transgression. (I Timothy 2:11-14)

Until challenged, conservatives were content simply to quote these scriptures almost without comment. When asked to explain I Corinthians 14, a staff writer for the American Christian Review replied succinctly, it "means that women are to take no part in the public teaching." He did not feel compelled to elaborate.¹⁶ Another conservative dismissed conjecture on these New Testament references by observing

¹⁶W. B. F. Treat, "Questions and Answers," ACR, XXIX (July 8, 1886), 221.

that man had no right to question God's judgment. "It is enough for us to know what He has ordained, and not the why."¹⁷ As the liberal assault intensified, however, evangelistic Disciples felt compelled to reconcile Paul's injunctions with nineteenth century social thought.

The Apostle Paul's justification of woman's silence based on Eve's transgression in the Garden of Eden complemented the ideology of conservative Disciples. Men evangelized and women remained silent because Jehovah created Adam first and Eve committed the initial sin. Daniel Sommer, a leading proponent of this argument, contended that since "the man was first formed [this] gave him the pre-eminence which the Holy Spirit through Paul intended that he should maintain."¹⁸ Another stubborn advocate of woman's silence, John B. Briney, stated flatly that "woman was given second place in creation and made subordinate to the leadership of the man."¹⁹ Both writers and numerous others assumed that Adam's primary creation made males the active proclaimers of the gospel and required females to remain passive in their church role.

¹⁷Olsen Norrisch, "Woman's 'Work' in the Church," GA, XXXV (March 2, 1893), 144.

¹⁸Daniel Sommer, "Woman's Place in the Church," OR, XXXII (May 22, 1890), 1.

¹⁹John B. Briney, "Paul and Women," CS, XXVIII (February 27, 1892), 183.

To evangelistic Disciples, Eve's sin demonstrated woman's inability to teach. In the American Christian Review a conservative minister proclaimed that the fact that "Eve was deceived in the garden is here sufficient reason why woman shall no longer be permitted to teach. She instructed man once, and the instruction was fatal."²⁰ Briney agreed, pointing out woman's first attempt to teach "proved so disastrous to the human family, that Paul delicately" urged women no longer to instruct in church matters.²¹ Elisha Sewell, the co-editor of the Gospel Advocate, repeated this assertion. "Woman set out to run the garden of Eden," he sermonized, "and the very first pass she made . . . brought such a flood of ruin upon herself, and upon the world, that the whole creation is groaning under it to this day."²² Essentially all these men assumed that woman's less rational, more emotional nature caused Eve's transgression. In the Garden of Eden, they believed that woman was deceived, but man persuaded. "For this reason," wrote a supporter of this conviction, "in the wisdom of God, [woman] is prohibited from becoming a public teacher of the masses."²³

²⁰J. C. Holloway, "Woman As Recognized by the New Testament," ACR, XXIX (December 16, 1886), 806.

²¹Briney, "Paul and Women," 183.

²²Elisha G. Sewell, "Shall Women Preach Publicly?" GA, XXXV (December 21, 1893), 806.

²³A Friend of Christ, "She Didn't Pick the Padlock," ACR, XXVII (March 6, 1884), 77. For similar conservative refer-

Given the masculine tenor of conservative Disciple theology, they found comfort in their belief that all first century evangelists were males. In a long series of Gospel Advocate articles examining whether the sisters should "pray or speak in public," George G. Taylor noted that "Christ was a man, the apostles were all men, the seventy were all men, the elders were all men and there is no proof whatever that a woman was ever appointed by Christ, the apostles or other inspired men . . . for any public purpose whatever."²⁴ In the same series, Taylor assured his readers that whenever sacred history revealed the sex of a preacher, "it was a male every time."²⁵ Other Disciples repeated this assertion, and not the least among them was the outspoken wife of the late Alexander Campbell.

Selina Huntington Campbell (1802-1893) spent twenty-seven years enjoying frequent honors as the widow of the Christian Church's best-known leader. A friend of almost

ences to Eve, see J. T. Showalter, "Sister Lemert's 'Few Last Words,'" ibid., XXIII (February 17, 1880), 49; I. C. Stone, "Reply to Clark Braden Concerning the Woman's Work in the Church," ibid., XXIX (December 16, 1886), 401; B. D. Miller, untitled letter, ibid. (November, 1886), 2-3; Eliza Fuston, "Letter from a Sister," FF, IV (June 15, 1888), 7; Elisha G. Sewell, "The Elevation and Proper Position of Women Under the Religion of Christ," GA, XXX (June 13, 1888), 8; David Lipscomb, "Woman and Her Work," ibid., XXXIV (October 13, 1892), 644.

²⁴George G. Taylor, "Should the Sisters Pray and Speak in Public," ibid., XXXI (February 20, 1889), 115.

²⁵Ibid. (January 30, 1889), 72.

every prominent church editor, her correspondence appeared frequently in their papers. Habitually underscoring her comments with short selections from her late husband's philosophy, she was especially fond of quoting "dear Mr. Campbell" on womanhood. In a letter to Mrs. S. E. Smart, a co-editor of the Christian Monitor, Selina Campbell reminisced that "No one could ever value the relation of woman to man" more than her husband. He always contended that "man [was] the prose and woman the poetry of humanity."²⁶ On another occasion, Mrs. Campbell recalled that he treasured woman "as 'Heaven's last and best gift to man.'"²⁷ Selina Campbell shared with her late husband the belief that woman served as a passive model of virtue. Females in the pulpit seemed to her a dangerous religious and social trend.

Although a fervent supporter of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, Mrs. Campbell was early disturbed by its tendency to encourage women speakers. In 1880, she was horrified to hear a sister suggest that the CWBM would bring "women before the public in such a way that they would become preachers." To that she replied: "When the Savior sent out his seventy to proclaim, not a woman was amongst

²⁶Mrs. Alexander Campbell to Mrs. S. E. Smart, December 23, 1880, James H. Garrison Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society; Selina H. Campbell, Home Life and Reminiscences of Alexander Campbell (St. Louis, 1882), 354.

²⁷Mrs. Alexander Campbell, "Woman's Rights," C, XIX (July 21, 1881), 2.

them, and when he chose his twelve as His special ambassadors, not a woman was amongst them."²⁸ In her articles, this esteemed widow usually referred to Paul's admonition of woman's silence, but her favorite theme always remained the lack of apostolic example for female evangelists. To her, nature indicated women were not suited for the ministry in either the first or nineteenth centuries. Mothers, she wrote, had neither the duty nor the "province to gather up their cradles and babies and take a three months' or six months' tour in preaching the word." In her view, women were "commanded to be 'keepers at home.'"²⁹

This reference to "keepers at home" went along with the conservative belief that true women were by nature passive. After listing the commissioned male evangelists in the New Testament, a Disciple scholar asserted that the word "evangelistria," the Greek term for female proclaimers, did not appear in sacred writings. This, he said, was because the "sphere of woman as portrayed in [the Bible] is the home and the social circle, rather than in public life."³⁰ In a letter to the Christian Standard, another preacher acknowledged that women had tenderly met the needs of Christ during

²⁸Mrs. Alexander Campbell to Mrs. S. F. Eastin, May 4, 1880, in CM, XIX (July, 1880), 323-24.

²⁹Mrs. Alexander Campbell, "Women Preachers," CS, XV (December 18, 1880), 402.

³⁰M. P. Hayden, "Have Women a Right to be Preachers?" ibid., XXVIII (April 9, 1892), 316.

his ministry, but he declared that their physical and mental natures caused the Messiah to choose males to spread the gospel. "This work, so intensely aggressive in its character, so exceedingly perilous in its execution was given to the rougher, sterner, and more daring nature of man."³¹

The scriptural and social arguments for woman's passive church role tended to merge in the rationale of conservative Disciples. In their minds, inspired writing plainly taught that woman was to be a "queen of the home," where she became "a noble being . . . worthy of man's true love and esteem." But if she tired of her position and abandoned her household, the word of God was blasphemed. A woman at the rostrum was an affront to man, to nature, and to the deity.³²

Motherhood was the most prominent social theme expounded by those opposed to women preaching. In the thinking of Disciple conservatives, children were woman's special province. Lipscomb admonished that the Christian mother's most sacred work prepared children for immortality. "This God committed to woman, and cut her off from all other works that would distract her."³³ Another conservative referred to children

³¹R. B. Henry, "Woman's Work in the Church," CS, VI (September 9, 1871), 281.

³²M. P. Hayden, "Christ and Woman," CO, IX (February 25, 1892), 116: Elisha G. Sewell, "Shall Women Preach Publicly?" 806.

³³David Lipscomb, "Women in the Church," GA, XXX (November 21, 1888), 6.

as a mother's "little congregation, to whom she has not only the right but the talent to speak."³⁴ In a devotional lesson addressed to her "sisters in Christ," Mrs. E. E. Graham painted a romantic image of the miracles associated with the "seclusion of the nursery." There, she wrote, "among the piles of blocks, picture-books, and dolls, and nameless treasures of the baby world; . . . there . . . nestled on the mother's loving breast, do I find God's workers in embryo."³⁵ Given this infatuation with maternal blessings, it is not surprising that male evangelists frequently paused to pay homage to their mothers' quiet, modest teachings at home.³⁶

These conservative Disciples also accepted the Victorian image of woman's physical weakness.³⁷ The wife of Daniel Sommer taught that woman lacked "the rugged strength" of a man and thus "she should not step out of her divinely

³⁴"1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35, and 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12," ACR, XV (February 26, 1872), 66.

³⁵Mrs. E. G. Graham, "Our Recruits," ibid., XXVII (October 16, 1884), 330.

³⁶For examples see J. C. Stark, "Woman's Mission," LCM, VII (January, 1868), 1-2; J. C. Creel, "My Mother," AT, X (August 16, 1878), 10; Elisha G. Sewell, "The Elevation and Proper Position of Women," 8; Elisha G. Sewell, "Woman's Real Position in the Church," GA, XXXIX (July 29, 1897), 469.

³⁷For a discussion of the nineteenth century concept of woman's biological weakness, see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth Century America," Journal of American History, LX (September, 1973), 332-56; John S. Haller, Jr., and Robin M. Haller, The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America (Urbana, Illinois, 1974), 48-61.

intended place or sphere." Woman, she believed, could subdue man's muscle and mind through appeals to his emotional side.³⁸ Publishing in the Christian Quarterly Review, a male Disciple pointed to woman's delicate frame, her weak voice, and her ability to conceive children as clear physiological reasons prohibiting her from the pulpit. Further, he appealed to nature, which in his opinion, always made the male mammal stronger, more ferocious, and "in every . . . instance the provider and defender of the female and her offspring."³⁹ The American Christian Review agreed. Its editor wrote that "when a woman arises to address an audience (if she be yet a woman) her native modesty throws a crimson veil over her delicate face, and the palpitation of her timid heart tells the agitation of a soul in unnatural circumstances."⁴⁰

David Lipscomb was particularly fond of arguing that woman's emotional nature made it impossible for her to exercise a responsible church position. He affirmed that an emotional man lacked the fitness to lead or to teach in the assembly. Since he believed that Jehovah made the female sex more emotional than the male sex, she was more fit to teach children than to lead adults. "My dear sisters," he

³⁸Katie W. Sommer, "Detached Paragraphs," OR, XXXIV (March 19, 1891), 7.

³⁹A. P. Terrell, "Should the Sisters Pray and Speak in Public?" 359.

⁴⁰1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35, and 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12," p. 66.

admonished patronizingly, "here your strong emotional nature and intense love may find [its] true field for usefulness and loving work without danger of misleading."⁴¹ Daniel Sommer echoed Lipscomb's philosophy. Beyond the domestic life and in the pulpit woman's temperamental personality was a threat to society. "But in civilized countries where she is properly cared for and kept from the rough and tumble, knock-about life of a man she is no doubt purer and better than man."⁴²

For these evangelistic Disciples the issue of sisters speaking in the church went beyond simple theology. They took comfort in the belief that the restoration of the first century church included a modest and unassuming role for woman. In their conceptual framework, the true woman remained passive, subservient to man, and quiet in her piety. Any woman who challenged this image and desired to preach denied both God's commandments and her natural disposition. An anonymous Disciple concisely grasped the conservative philosophy in an 1884 statement: "I pity from the bottom of my heart, the woman who, dissatisfied with her sphere of action, would pervert the word of God, ignore his wisdom and--want to be a man."⁴³

⁴¹David Lipscomb, "Woman's Station and Work," GA, XXX (October 10, 1888), 6-7.

⁴²Daniel Sommer, "Woman," OR, XXXI (September 6, 1888), 6.

⁴³A Friend of Christ, "She Didn't Pick the Padlock," 77.

Those Disciples favoring woman's ministry rejected the association of women preaching with masculinity. Rather, their arguments continually emphasized the concept of enhanced womanhood. To them the sisters brought to the pulpit the special emotions and sensitivity that only a woman possessed. Such liberal affirmations of woman's active church position centered around faith in the "new woman" and carefully avoided an association with feminism.

This perception of the female sex was best expressed by Ella M. Huffman when she addressed the Christian Woman's Board of Missions convention of 1893. Delighted by the recent ordination of women, she enthusiastically proclaimed that there had "recently been a wonderful kindling of the spirit of woman," and that "the whole world [was] talking of the new womanhood--the higher womanhood." To her this "new woman" was actually a return to the equality shared by Adam and Eve. She praised the mother of mankind who "led Adam out from the Garden of Eden, and hand in hand with him, started up the rugged steps of life to a new Paradise." At some point in heathen society woman lost her equality with man. Nonetheless, this Disciple gave thanks that at the dawn of the twentieth century woman's condition had improved, and her sex was "developing into God's ideal of womanhood."⁴⁴

⁴⁴Ella M. Huffman, "The Higher Conquest," CO, X (October 26, 1893), 675.

To those conservatives who viewed these developments with skepticism, she assured "that in the higher conquest woman [would not] go forth to battle in some unwomanly way." Rather the "new womanhood" would emulate "the housewifely Penelope . . . whom the alluring voices of the world can never win from a higher duty."⁴⁵

With their faith in the "new woman," ecumenical Disciples used an assortment of arguments to justify female ordination. Their arsenal contained a variety of replies to the Pauline affirmation of woman's silence; they pointed to what they considered scriptural authority for female preaching and to biblical examples of women evangelists; and, above all, they replied to the conservative social concept of woman's passive role in religion. Liberals confidently affirmed that they were on sound Bible and social ground in advocating woman's right to a more active church posture. They fully agreed with the sister who complained before the CWBM convention of 1890 that "the door of the church is not as open to woman, now . . . as it was eighteen hundred years ago."⁴⁶

In common with the feminists who wanted expanded opportunities in the church for women, liberal Disciples had to overcome the Apostle Paul's command that women were to be silent in the churches. The conservative position was

⁴⁵Ibid. (November 2, 1893), 692.

⁴⁶Ella O. Fallon, "Woman's Work in the Church," CE, XXVII (October 23, 1890), 678.

attacked from a number of angles. The most prominent of these held that Paul's writings were simple concessions to Greek culture. They argued that for Grecian women to speak in mixed assemblies branded them as prostitutes. Thus the word "shame" in I Corinthians 11:35 indicated the cultural impropriety of woman's speech in the first century. If this prohibition were strictly cultural in nature, then it was never intended as a permanent Christian practice.⁴⁷ A Disciple, identified simply as "Paul's Friend," suggested that forbidding women to speak originated in Asian worship and was "unworthy of our enlightened age."⁴⁸

Liberals enjoyed contrasting the degraded condition of Hellenistic women with the elevated position of their nineteenth century sisters. In 1889, the editors of the Christian Oracle assured their readers that Paul's injunctions were strictly local in meaning. "In this free land where customs

⁴⁷Mrs. M. M. L. Bayless, "Woman's Work--What Is It?" CM, XIX (June, 1880), 265; J. G. Graves, "Woman's Ancient Position," CE, XXV (May 10, 1888), 277; J. N. Clem, "Christianity, Civilization and Woman," ibid., XXIX (June 2, 1892), 341; Mrs. H. B. Lucas, "The Spiritual Relations of Women," CS, X (August 28, 1875), 273; "'Let the Women Keep Silence,'--Some Reminiscences and a Dream," ibid., XXVIII (August 13, 1892), 689. Persis L. Christian, an outspoken official of the CWBM, looked back at ancient Corinth with a sense of rage: "It was a sad thing for both the men and women of Corinth that it was a shame for women to speak in the churches. The history of the world is darkened by the fact that it has been a shame even to be a woman." Persis L. Christian, "Woman's Interest," ibid. (April 9, 1892), 324.

⁴⁸Paul's Friend, "Mathesian," ACR, XXVII (March 27, 1884), 97.

are so different," they affirmed, women were not "prohibited from praying, exhorting, and teaching."⁴⁹ In the same manner, a midwestern minister assumed that in Paul's age it was a shame for women to speak in the churches. But, he suggested, "in Indiana . . . it is a shame for her not to do so."⁵⁰ Shortly after listening to Anna Shaw, a noted Methodist evangelist and temperance advocate, a Missouri Disciple proclaimed that "if Paul's words are universal law . . . [then] she, with many other earnest Christian women will find themselves in eternal perdition for the sin of unwarranted soul-saving."⁵¹

This cultural approach to Paul's teachings illustrated the way in which liberal Christian Church leaders accepted the image of the deferential "new woman." After presenting the Greek cultural argument, a Disciple sister cautiously explained that she was "not a wearer of the Bloomer costume, nor an advocate of popular woman's rights."⁵² The Christian Oracle editorialized that Paul intended all women to be "virtuous, modest, sober, and true women." It maintained that in the nineteenth century his command of silence applied to

⁴⁹"Talks with Querists," CO, VIII (April 2, 1891), 210.

⁵⁰Jarius, "'Paul and Women'--and Briney," CS, XXVIII (March 5, 1892), 213.

⁵¹W. O. Thomas, "Inter-State Woman's Conference," 234.

⁵²Mared Preston, "Woman's Place in the Church," CS, IV (August 14, 1869), 258.

the clamorous "women of the Salvation Army kind, who . . . like to wear such names as 'Salvation Sal' [and] 'Shouting Sarah.'" In no way, however, was his command to be applied to "a modest Christian woman, a wife or a mother, who humbly leads the devotions of her brethren and sisters in the prayer-meeting."⁵³

A few Disciples countered the term "silence" in I Corinthians and I Timothy by claiming that the Greek word "gunaikes," which was usually translated "women" should have been rendered "wives." Elijah Goodwin accepted this concept stating that "silence" in these passages forbade a married woman from speaking "in such a way as to indicate insubordination to the husband."⁵⁴ But he believed that unmarried women were free to exhort and to pray in the church. This line of reasoning's chief flaw was that it denied the right of pulpit preaching to women with spouses. No one understood this dilemma better than Goodwin whose own wife was the most visible female lecturer among the Disciples of Christ during the 1870's and early 1880's.⁵⁵

⁵³"The Woman Question," CO, VI (January 24, 1889), 56.

⁵⁴Elijah Goodwin, "Querists' Drawer," C, XIII (June 16, 1875), 3. See also Marinda R. Lemert, "Keep Silence, Wives," GA, XXX (June 13, 1888), 5; Marinda R. Lemert, "Universal Equality of the Sexes in Christ," CS, XXIII (June 16, 1888), 374.

⁵⁵In his diary, Elijah Goodwin recorded an incident which sheds some light on the fortitude of Marcia Goodwin. In late May, 1877, the two were to speak before the Inter-State Sunday

Much more acceptable to liberal Disciples was the concept that Paul's admonitions referred only to woman's submission to the authority of man. Writing for the Christian in 1880, George Anderson testified that translators mislead Bible readers by rendering "laleo" in I Corinthinas 14 and I Timothy 2 as "to speak." Rather he believed the passages' contexts suggested that woman had the prerogative to evangelize so long as she did not exercise authority over man. Since females could assume an active church role if it did not threaten male dominance, this position fit well within the image of "new womanhood."⁵⁶ In 1890, a minister from Medicine Lodge, Kansas, expressed this thought in the Christian Standard. "Men govern the church," he declared, "select its elders, deacons, employ preachers . . . in fact, do all things necessary for good order, decorum and prosperity of the church." For woman to do this was a sin. To him, woman could "sing, pray, exhort, teach, and even preach," but in every case she had to "remain in subjection to the man."⁵⁷

School Convention in Union City, Indiana. The day before her lecture, Marcia Goodwin suffered a painful broken bone in her hand. Despite this, she read her essay on "Children--their Spiritual Wants and Needs," and, according to her husband, made "a fine impression upon the large convention." Quoted in Mathes, Life of Elijah Goodwin, 264-65.

⁵⁶George Anderson, "Woman's Duty to Preach," C, XVII (May 18, 1880), 3.

⁵⁷David Nation, "The Woman Question," CS, XXV (February 1, 1890), 75.

In overcoming the silence commanded in I Timothy 2, advocates of woman's ministry were compelled to reinterpret the drama of the Garden of Eden. As ecumenical Disciples gradually feminized their theology, Eve's sin lessened and guilt was generally shifted to her husband. Marinda R. Lemert, one of the Disciples' most prolific female writers, painted her Eve as a woman much abused by history. "Upon her creation," Lemert observed, Eve was presented "to Adam, who immediately laid claim to her." This writer considered Adam negligent in his duty to provide "watchcare and protection" over the woman. Thus he assumed equal guilt when Eve fell "victim to the wily deceiver, and so unconsciously [brought] death upon the race."⁵⁸ Lemert went on to compare Mother Eve to the Apostle Paul. Prior to his miraculous meeting of

⁵⁸Marinda R. Lemert, "To the Sisterhood," ACR, XXIII (April 27, 1880), 3. Marinda R. Lemert (1811-1891) is an enigma among Disciple women of the late nineteenth century. She was by far the most prolific female writer within the Christian Church and yet, with one minor exception, she is totally ignored by Disciple historians. A retired school teacher and widow from Hebron, Ohio, she began writing for the church periodicals at age 60, publishing in the Christian Standard, Christian Pioneer, Gospel Advocate, and the Christian-Evangelist. Most of her articles appeared in the American Christian Review from 1878 to 1886. Although the authors of her obituary note her special interest in promoting woman's role in the church, Lemert's articles covered a wide range of subjects--prayer, the Holy Spirit, church worship, baptism, premillennialism, and so on. She enjoyed especially matching wits with her brethren in deep theological discussions. Not a few male Disciples reacted negatively to her biting critiques. One brother felt compelled to remind Lemert that she was a woman and it looked "terribly [sic] to [him] for a Christian woman to assail our well-known and esteemed" brethren. Another male Disciple accused her of

Jesus on the Damascus Road, he had with good conscience persecuted Christians. After his conversion, however, he became the respected evangelist to the Gentiles. Eve's actions were similar. "That she sinned can not be denied," Lemert professed, "but she did it in ignorance and unbelief." In naming her third son "Seth" which means "Jehovah's appointed" Eve revealed "her faith in God [and her] deep piety." Thus Lemert asked, if no one condemned the "great apostle to the Gentiles because of his sins in unbelief," why should men censure Eve? The article confidently concluded: "I expect to greet her, with you, my sisters, on that glad day, in robes of spotless white."⁵⁹

Writing in the Christian Standard, Eliza Glasier's interpretation of mankind's fall provided for an even stronger condemnation of Adam. She believed that the first man stood beside his wife when the sin occurred and "by his silence, consented to her act." Furthermore, his was the greater guilt. God gave the commandment to "the man saying . . . 'of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt

"feeling like her Maker had made a pique at her because she was a woman!" Marinda R. Lemert deserves more recognition than she has received. R. H. and I. L. Moss, "Lemert," CS, XXVII (October 24, 1891), 903; William C. Trimble, "On Prayer, Trimble to Lemert," ACR, XXVI (April 19, 1883), 121; J. T. Showalter, "Another Call for the Proof," ibid., XXV (January 19, 1882), 26; Elizabeth Ann Hartsfield, "Shall the Sisters Speak?" in Elizabeth Ann Hartsfield and others, Women in the Church (Lexington, Kentucky, 1953), 13-15.

⁵⁹Marinda Lemert, "To the Sisterhood," ACR, XXIII (May 4, 1880), 141.

not eat.'" To this Disciple there was no record of woman ever hearing the injunction. "It was Adam, who . . . heard his Maker's solemn command, [and] yet defied his authority by weakly yielding to temptation."⁶⁰

Although some Disciples defended Eve, others willingly acknowledged her guilt and pointed to the mother of Jesus as woman's redemption from Eden's curse. A male advocate of woman's ordination proclaimed to his sisters in 1892 that "if Adam received the forbidden fruit from the hand of Eve . . . you [have] received your Redeemer from the arms of Mary."⁶¹ In her quiet piety, Mary not only gave birth to mankind's savior, but also elevated womankind above the stain of Eve's transgression. Having compared these two biblical women, a Disciple sister assured the "daughters of the nineteenth century," that "to-day we sit under the olive tree and pluck the fruit of gracious Mary's planting."⁶²

Whether they defended the actions of Eve or looked to Mary as woman's redemption, these ecumenical Disciples spoke in terms of the "new woman." Marinda Lemert advocated woman's right to speak, but saw Eve's piety expressed through her

⁶⁰Elizabeth E. C. Glasier, "Woman, A Thank Offering," CS, XXVIII (October 8, 1892), 855.

⁶¹M. B. L., "Open Letter to Bros. Hayden and Briney," ibid., 889.

⁶²Ellen Patton, "Woman--Her Past, Present and Future," ibid., XVI (December 10, 1881), 393.

child bearing. Furthermore, the emphasis upon Eden found Adam's sin magnified because of his failure in his natural role as woman's head. On the other hand, Mary's maternity removed from woman the curse of degradation. In using Mary to advocate greater female participation in the church, one Disciple sister concluded that her example also hinted "at the glorious possibilities of motherhood."⁶³

Although much energy was expended explaining away Paul's command of female silence, liberals also put forth affirmative biblical arguments favoring woman's ordination. They pointed to Paul's instruction to the Corinthian women on how to pray and to prophesy; they appealed to Acts 2:17 and Galatians 3:28 which suggested the equality of the sexes in the church; and they paraded before disapproving conservatives examples of women who they believed exercised the office of prophet and evangelist. Whatever their approach, however, liberals always assumed that woman ministered differently from man. She may have had an active role in the first century church, but it was performed with natural female modesty.

In presenting a positive argument for sisters' speaking, liberals turned often to I Corinthians 11:5-6. This passage gave instruction as to how Greek women were to perform their religious duties: "every woman that prayeth or

⁶³Ibid.

prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head . . . let her be covered." For Disciple liberals this was indisputable evidence that the same apostle who commanded woman's silence in Hellenistic culture also acknowledged her right to speak before mixed assemblies. However, just as the admonition of silence was cultural in nature, woman's manner of speaking also made concessions to its environment. Paul's instruction requiring a veil was intended "to preserve . . . the modesty and sobriety of her sex" and thus to prevent women from usurping "authority unbecoming her moral and social condition."⁶⁴

Closely associated with this scripture were two other passages which suggested to ecumenical Disciples the equality of the sexes within the church. In the first, Acts 2:17, the Apostle Peter declared that the Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophesy: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." In the second, Galatians 3:28, Paul admonished a Greek church that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, . . . bond, nor free, . . .

⁶⁴J. C. Irving, "Our Power--Its Development," *ibid.*, VIII (June 14, 1873), 185. See also Paul's Friend, "Mathesian," *ACR*, XXVII (May 29, 1884), 169; J. G. Chinn, "Is It Scriptural for Women to Pray in Public," *AT*, V (October 23, 1873), 3; Laurence W. Scott, "May Women Pray in Public?" *ibid.* (December 18, 1873), 3; Rosetta Butler Hastings, "Shall Women Pray," *CM*, XI (August, 1872), 350; David Nation, "The Duty of Our Sisters in the Churches," *CP*, IX (July 15, 1869), [216]; James M. Mathes, "Querists' Department," *CR*, n.s., II (May, 1868), 152; J., "Criticism," *CS*, VII (May 25, 1872), 163; B. U. Watkins, "Paul and the Women," *ibid.*, XXVIII (March 26, 1892), 268;

male nor female." For liberals, these texts plainly gave woman an active church posture. Most concurred with Samuel Magee, an Illinois evangelist, who sermonized that the rights granted in the early church seemed to have been "abridged in the modern world, but, thank God, a new era is dawning in which she can claim her rights."⁶⁵

Using I Corinthians 11, Acts 2, and Galatians 3 as their texts, advocates of woman's ordination then proceeded to list examples of prominent, active Bible women. In the Old Testament, they pointed to Miriam, the sister of Moses and a prophetess (Exodus 15:20) and to Deborah, a judge in Israel and a prophetess (Judges 4:4 - 5:31). New Testament examples were more numerous: Priscilla who taught Apollos and labored with Paul (Acts 18:26, Romans 16:3); Anna the aged prophetess (Luke 2:37-38); the woman of Samaria who urged her city to hear Christ (John 4:4-42); Mary of Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, who were commissioned to tell the

Jarius, "'Paul and Women'--and Briney," 338; Lizzie Corbin, "Woman's Work in the Church," OPG, III (January, 1880), 62.

⁶⁵Samuel Magee, "Women in Zion," CS, XXIII (December 22, 1888), 816. See also John Shockey, "Is It Wrong for Women to Speak in Church?" ACR, XIII (December 20, 1870), 402; Paul's Friend, "Mathesian," ibid., XXVIII (April 17, 1884), 125; ibid. (May 15, 1884), 143; J. M. Martin, "Women in the Churches," AT, V (March 26, 1874), 3; untitled letter, CE, XXV (May 11, 1888), 295; J. S. Hughes, "Women Preachers," ibid., XXX (July 20, 1893), 455; M. L. Streater, "Woman's Equality Established on the Day of Pentecost," ibid., XXXII (October 17, 1895), 662; James M. Mathes, "Querists"

Apostles of Christ's resurrection (Mark 16:1-8); the four prophesying daughters of Phillip (Acts 2:8-9); Tyrphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis who "labored much in the Lord," (Romans 16:12); and "those women that labored with" Paul (Philippians 4:3). Bolstered by these examples, advocates of woman preaching took to the offensive. If it is an error for woman to speak, declared Paul's Friend, then "everytime that God . . . made a prophetess of a woman, from Miriam to the close of Revelation, he has refuted this mistake."⁶⁶ In a similar statement, another Disciple prefaced his discussion of these women by stating: "Let the world quit asking what a woman can do, and ask what she has done, and the question [of her speaking] will be answered."⁶⁷

This index of female evangelists was used to ridicule the timidity of conservative ministers. An anonymous contributor to the American Christian Review claimed that many modern preachers preferred error to being corrected by a woman. Had Priscilla taken them aside to learn "the way of the Lord more perfectly," he believed that nineteenth century

Department," CR, VI (March, 1872), 127; Marinda Lemert, "No Respector of Persons," ibid., n.s., II (November, 1883), 333; Disciple, "Woman's Privilege in the Church," CS, II (February 9, 1867), 41; Priscilla Mullens, "A Trip Through Eighteen Centuries Back to Corinth," ibid., XVI (July 30, 1881), 242; O. E. Brown, "Women Preachers," E, VII (July 24, 1872), 234.

⁶⁶Paul's Friend, "The Padlock--An Innovation," ACR, XXVII (January 10, 1884), 90.

⁶⁷D. R. Lucas, "What Women Have Done," CO, VII (July 10, 1890), 446.

Disciple clergymen would have sent her away and would have commanded her to teach only children.⁶⁸ Another liberal also appealed to Priscilla's example. Suppose, he asked, that more than Apollos had been in error. If "Priscilla . . . had proceeded to expound the way of the Lord more perfectly to hundreds that were in need of more light, would that be a violation of Paul's teachings?"⁶⁹ An Arkansas evangelist contrasted the command of silence to Christ's relationship with women. "If Paul's prohibition of women's speaking is to be general in its application," he affirmed, then "it is a good thing that Jesus got that good work from the woman of Samaria before Paul closed their mouths." She "captured a city for Jesus . . . but just let a woman try that now, and we will . . . stop her mad career." He concluded, "Jesus died to redeem man from the slavery of sin, and woman from the slavery of man."⁷⁰

For the most part conservatives replied to these examples by claiming that Bible women taught in private, or instructed only other women, or performed a special woman's ministry short of public speaking. The debate excited the emotions

⁶⁸A Disciple, "Shall Women Preach?" ACR, XXIX (October 7, 1886), 321.

⁶⁹O. Higgins, "The Woman Question," CO, X (July 13, 1893), 426.

⁷⁰J. N. Clem, "Paul, and Women, and Christ," CS, XXVIII (August 13, 1892), 668.

of both liberals and conservatives, and occasionally the latter's rebuttals drifted into the realm of extreme poor taste. In the Gospel Advocate, George G. Taylor dismissed Phillip's daughters' act of prophesying. He did not understand every instance of speaking as establishing a precedent for all time. After all, Balaam's ass prophesied, but this should not "be regarded as divine authority to fill our pulpits with literal rather than figurative asses."⁷¹ A. P. Terrell was just as insulting. "The Spirit could use a dumb beast, a wicked man, or a Christian woman to tell future events"; he declared, "but it does not follow from this that all dumb beasts, wicked men, and Christian women are to tell future events, or speak in public."⁷²

In 1888, the evangelistic Gospel Advocate and the ecumenical Christian-Evangelist briefly clashed over woman-related church innovations. Lipscomb's paper observed that there was "trouble in almost every church . . . because a few women [were] assuming to run and rule." It professed that such congregations accepted "perversions of the service of God" because woman's "strong emotional nature demands whatever strikes her fancy, whether authorized by the Lord or not." Garrison's Christian-Evangelist strongly responded to what it

⁷¹George G. Taylor, "Should the Sisters Pray and Speak in Public," GA, XXXI (January 23, 1889), 60.

⁷²A. P. Terrell, "Should the Sisters Pray and Speak in Public," 348.

considered a "slander on the sisterhood." In common with those elements of American religion that were becoming feminized, this paper considered men far too "involved in politics, money getting and worldiness" to provide for an effective church program. Thus "the sisters [were] compelled to . . . work or see the church go to the dogs." Furthermore, the Christian-Evangelist insisted women possessed "finer moral fiber than men" and by nature they were endowed with greater piety. In its conclusion, the article suggested that in contrast to the Gospel Advocate's "slow-going conservative males," religiously active women could cause "a gospel boom that would make earth and heaven rejoice."⁷³ The position taken by the Christian-Evangelist typified the liberal attitude toward woman's social status in the church.

Frequently these Disciples praised what they considered woman's special emotional sensitivity as an asset for the church. In an early Christian Monitor, an evangelist proclaimed that the "sisters have more of this than the brothers, and we have need to apply . . . their love and zeal to warm up the cold and indifferent."⁷⁴ In 1878, Garrison determined that excluding woman's prayers and exhortations resulted in "a loss of heart-power."⁷⁵ A prominent Disciple educator,

⁷³"Pen and Scissors," CE, XXV (December 13, 1888), 771.

⁷⁴J. H. McCollough, "Should Woman Pray and Exhort?" LCM, VII (December, 1868), 356.

⁷⁵James H. Garrison, "Woman in the Prayer Meeting," C, XVI (April 25, 1878), 4.

Charles L. Loos, shared this belief. He was thankful that "wise men in the Christian Church [had] learned . . . to recognize woman's marvelous capacities of mind and heart for noblest action."⁷⁶

Whenever conservatives condemned public speaking by women, those Christian Church women who sought the pulpit objected forcefully. Marinda Lemert announced in 1888 that after a "nine years' combat with the guardians of female modesty," she found it impossible to imagine how "the sisters [could] tarnish their modesty by speaking of Jesus as the Savior of the lost."⁷⁷ That same year Jessie H. Brown touched on a similar theme. Addressing the CWBM convention in Cleveland, Ohio, she listed several prominent female humanitarians, including the prison reformer Elizabeth Fry, the abolitionist Lucretia Mott, the hospital reformer Florence Nightingale, and the temperance crusader Francis Willard. In each case she rhetorically asked whether these women were "less womanly," or "less loyal to a husband," or "less true to the home," or "less devoted in the relations or a daughter and sister," simply because they were faithful to a "mission of reform?"⁷⁸

⁷⁶Charles L. Loos, "Woman's Place and Power," CS, XXIII (May 12, 1888), 285.

⁷⁷Marinda R. Lemert, "Universal Equality of the Sexes in Christ," 374.

⁷⁸Jessie H. Brown, "Christian Womanhood," CS, XXIII (October 20, 1888), 663.

Advocates of woman's ministry rarely challenged the female's obligation to the home, arguing that evangelizing did not interfere with woman's natural domestic duties. In 1890, a Disciple sister proclaimed that the "excuse that the home is woman's sphere is not sufficient" to prevent her from speaking in the church. After all, men worked to "earn their bread and support little children, without neglecting their home duties." She had faith that a woman could do the same. Most nineteenth century women, she concluded, possessed the free "time to preach two or three sermons weekly and visit the sick as a pastor."⁷⁹ Speaking in agreement, Mrs. Simpson Ely addressed a Missouri convention of the CWBM. She condemned those males who neglected their domestic duties by spending weeks away from home holding gospel meetings. Men should remain close to their wives and share equally in the duties of the family, the church, and the state. Under these circumstances the coming generation would be less criminal and more refined. When that occurred, she felt that the "weakest woman could govern such a people."⁸⁰

The debate over "shall the sisters speak" divided Disciples scripturally and culturally. Both ecumencial and evangelistic churchmen appealed to certian Bible passages and

⁷⁹One of Us, "About Us Women," CE, XXVII (October 30, 1890), 702.

⁸⁰Mrs. Simpson Ely, "Thoughts by the Way," ibid., XXIX (September 1, 1892), 549.

examples to justify their practices. The problem also centered around their perception of woman's place in society. To conservatives, the cult of true womanhood dictated that females were to remain passive in the church. By contrast, liberals willingly allowed the "new woman" to preach and to play a more active role in religious affairs. Whether theology or culture exercised the greater influence on Disciple thought is difficult to ascertain with absolute certainty. Nonetheless, some evidence suggests that conservative Disciples had difficulty reconciling their social concept of woman's role with their theological arguments denying females the pulpit.

Despite their refusal to accept female ministers, most evangelistic Disciples allowed women to teach children in the Sunday school and to write for their periodicals. A few ultra-conservatives, however, concluded that even these activities violated Paul's teachings. In order to defend woman's prerogatives in these two areas, less extreme conservatives faced a dilemma. They justified sisters teaching children and writing in their papers by appealing to the same basic scriptural arguments used by their ecumenical brethren. Having made concessions to the liberal interpretation of woman-related Bible passages, the conservatives were then forced to distinguish on other grounds between pulpit preaching and these allowable practices. In their minds the distinction lay in woman's natural social status.

Each of the more conservative newspapers published letters and articles from the sisters. Most of these were devotional in nature or items of particular interest to women. Not infrequently, however, conservative Disciple women wrote substantial theological treatises on subjects ranging from baptism, to the proper practices of worship, to the nature of the Holy Spirit. A few sisters contributed regularly. Katie Sommer not only wrote for the Octographic Review, but also served as its unofficial editor while her husband, Daniel Sommer, was absent on extended preaching tours; the Gospel Advocate opened its pages to Mrs. T. P. Holman, Amanda Bostick, and Charlotte Fanning; and for several years, the Firm Foundation published a continuing feature "Talks with the Sisters" by an aging Disciple known only as "Sarai."

In the Firm Foundation for February, 1886, Sarai indignantly revealed that a brother had objected to her column. He quoted to her Paul's statement "I suffer not a woman to teach" and also threw at her the apostle's command that women were not "to usurp authority over the man." Her reply was emphatic. "To usurp authority over the man," she responded, pertained only to the relationship of wives to husbands. Otherwise, she asked, how do you explain Priscilla's teaching Apollos? In I Corinthians 11, she continued, Paul "does not forbid a woman to prophesy . . . but says she must not do so . . . in a brazen manner." Having presented these liberal arguments for woman's right to teach, she quickly emphasized

that woman could only do so in approved media such as the church periodicals. Sarai carefully noted that Paul advocated female "modesty, the heaven given attribute of woman which . . . she casts aside whenever she enters the rostrum or pulpit." Sarai observed that "the sisters of the F.F." did not desire "to rule their husbands," or to "become pulpit preachers." Rather "in a modest, christianly [sic] manner" they would lead souls to salvation.⁸¹ Sarai was no supporter of the "new woman."

A comparable controversy raged in the Gospel Advocate for most of 1888. In March, a male Disciple questioned whether the command of woman's silence applied to the Sunday school and therefore even prohibited females from teaching children. Lipscomb replied that woman could instruct children and in addition she could teach her husband if he were more ignorant than she. "They must not do this in an assuming, authoritative way," he continued, "but in a modest deferential manner." He then pointed to Priscilla and to Phillip's daughters as examples of women who taught in the first century. Nonetheless, he carefully qualified his answer by claiming that Bible women never stood "before promiscuous assemblies." They always taught in private.⁸²

⁸¹Sarai, "Talks with the Sisters," FF, II (February, 1886), 10-11. Two years later this Disciple referred to her writings as her "preaching." Ibid., IV (June 1, 1888), 5.

⁸²David Lipscomb, "Woman's Work in the Church," GA, XXX (March 14, 1888), 6-7.

Mrs. T. P. Holman of Fayetteville, Tennessee, decided to pursue the matter in more detail. She opened her article in the Gospel Advocate by quoting the New Testament passage which commanded Christians to be a "peculiar people." After the brother questioned woman's right to teach children, she explained that "we have more 'peculiar people' in [the Christian Church] than . . . in any of the denominations." Although agreeing with Lipscomb, she desired to "look at this question from a woman's standpoint." Mrs. Holman defended woman's limited right to teach Sunday school by quoting most of the standard arguments for female preaching; the distinctive feature of her article, however, was its closing language which seemed out of character for the conservative image of true womanhood. She strongly deplored the oppressive male supposition that "modern woman must not venture to express an opinion on any religious subject in the presence of the vast amount of dignity and learning and wisdom and goodness embodied in . . . some of our brethren of the present day."⁸³

One of her brothers soon confronted Mrs. Holman, claiming her writings skirted the heresy of woman's preaching. She denied this. Retreating to the concept of woman's domestic sphere, she claimed that "women should not be public proclaimers" and she pointed to her seven children as personal

⁸³Mrs. T. P. Holman, "A Peculiar People," ibid. (May 2, 1888), 12.

reasons for not assuming the rostrum. Still, this conservative sister mused, some women had no home, no husband, and no children. Would it be a sin for them "to go out in . . . the world and tell of the unsearchable riches of the gospel?"⁸⁴ When again challenged to explain her views, Mrs. Holman admitted her confusion concerning Paul's command of woman's silence. "Now I am ready to admit, that . . . language is as clear as the noonday sun," she confessed, "It is only that dozen or so other passages that seem to teach differently that have mystified me."⁸⁵

By October, Lipscomb had had enough. Any one who would "read carefully . . . the article from sister Holman," he indicated, "can find a pretty good reason why the Lord did not suffer a woman to teach." Condemning those strong-minded women who had "a thirst for the publicity and applause of the rostrum," he reaffirmed his belief that woman's "strong emotional nature" caused "her to be easily deceived." A Christain woman was to raise children; therefore Mrs. Holman should quit trying to lead and teach, and [instead] fulfill her mission."⁸⁶

⁸⁴Mrs. T. P. Holman, "'Let Your Women Keep Silence,'" ibid. (August 1, 1888), 8.

⁸⁵Mrs. T. P. Holman, "Woman's Scriptural Status Again," ibid. (November 21, 1888), 8.

⁸⁶David Lipscomb, "Woman's Station and Work," 6. Mrs. Holman could not resist a parting shot at Lipscomb's claim that women had "a thirst for the publicity and applause of the rostrum." She asked whether the same was "the motive

"Sarai" and Lipscomb faced the same impasse. On the one hand, they firmly believed that modest true women must shun the enticements of active pulpit preaching. Yet when they justified with scripture woman's unpretentious role as a contributor to the church periodicals or as an instructor of children, they opened a Pandora's Box leading to female ordination. In both cases they fell back on their personal perceptions of woman's social status, preaching the passive virtues of the cult of true womanhood.

By the end of the century, the Disciple rationale either for or against the sister's speaking was firmly established. Both sides pointed with equal fervor to key Bible passages and to favorite interpretations of these scriptures. Both used almost the same rhetoric in describing woman. She was to be modest, she was to love the home, and by nature she was to possess greater emotional warmth and more piety than man. Essentially the difference between liberals and conservatives was in the nature of their religious appeal. Ecumenical Disciples, with their flexible and more feminine theology, welcomed women into an active church role. Females could bring the benefits of womanhood and motherhood into the church. Evangelistic Disciples preached a more virile, more masculine gospel. Since their religious style emphasized an active

actuating men who preached the gospel?" If not, then charity would suggest "a better motive for women." Mrs. T. P. Holman, "Woman's Scriptural Status Again," 8.

combat with the sins of the world, their women were relegated to the passive functions of preserving traditions in the home. Evangelistic and ecumenical members of the Christian Church were products of their environment. Writing in their most conservative periodical, one dogmatic minister declared that "feminine instincts" rebelled against the thought of women preachers. He then added with emphasis: "If it be argued that American customs are modifying, if not changing, these instincts, [then] so much the worse for our customs."⁸⁷ By contrast, Persis L. Christian, a prominent lecturer for the CWBM, expressed gratitude after reading from the census of 1890 that over 700 women were preaching for the various Protestant denominations. "There are those who will not call these things progress," she acknowledged, "but when we see the morning light growing brighter and brighter and spreading out over the earth, we may be sure that the sun is rising."⁸⁸

In the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, woman gained a greater voice in the polity of the Christian Church. The philosophical theories, which eventually led to ordained women in the 1890's, were closely associated with the growing influence of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. Ecumenical Disciples looked upon this society as

⁸⁷L. F. Bittle, untitled article, OR, XXXI (December 20, 1888), 5.

⁸⁸Mrs. Persis L. Christian, "Woman's Interest," CS, XXVIII (April 9, 1892), 324.

the vehicle by which woman's sensitivity could be harnessed for the church; conservatives considered it a cancer which threatened the stability of both the church and the family. Acceptance or rejection of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions helped the Disciples focus their perception of woman's status in society. The CWBM became the agency through which liberal Disciples accepted woman's ordination.

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S BOARD OF MISSIONS

One of the cardinal tenets of the cult of true womanhood held that by nature women possessed greater piety than men. Since religion was considered complementary to woman's "proper sphere" (the home), many middle class males accepted with ease a substantial church role for their wives, sisters, and daughters.¹ An important aspect of the active church work of women in the late nineteenth century was the creation of the various denominational missionary societies for women. Between 1869 and 1874, female missionary societies came into existence in the Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches.² Not only did these organizations assist in the promotion of the Protestant gospel at home and abroad, but they also provided for women an opportunity to develop an active role beyond the domestic environment. In a quiet and conservative manner, the missionary society movements changed woman's status during the last two and a half decades of the nineteenth century.

Founded in 1874, the Christian Woman's Board of Missions (CWBM) became the vehicle by which the Disciples of Christ accepted a larger church and social role for their sisters.

¹Welter, "True Womanhood," 152-53.

²McAllister and Tucker, Journey in Faith, 259.

By participating in this society, women learned to organize missions, gained the courage to speak out on church issues, and eventually secured the right of pulpit preaching. At century's end, a number of prominent male and female church leaders were praising the CWBM for its educational influence upon women. In her discussion of the "new womanhood," Ella M. Huffman insisted that "the greatest spiritual development and extension of the sphere of woman's work in the [Christian] church began with the organization of our beloved C. W. B. M."³ James H. Garrison rejoiced that through this society Disciple women had gained greater insight as to their capabilities. Addressing a class of young women studying to be "pastoral helpers," he proclaimed that the CWBM's tremendous missionary success was "eclipsed by the greater reflex good which has come to our sisterhood, to our homes, and to our churches."⁴ Jessie H. Brown, a popular CWBM official, stated most clearly its influence upon woman's status. She believed that a wise observer would not look to the schools, churches, and missions created by the organization as its most important achievement. Instead, she averred, "he would point . . . to what it has done as an educator . . . for the individual women whom it has enlisted in its work." She went on to observe that the

³Ella M. Huffman, "The Higher Conquest," CO, X (November 9, 1893), 708.

⁴James H. Garrison, Annual Address to Graduates of the School of Pastoral Helpers [ca. 1900], typescript, Garrison Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

CWBM uplifted the social nature of women by teaching them how to organize to accomplish specific projects; it uplifted the intellectual side of women by encouraging them to learn about the world; and it uplifted the spiritual side of women by enabling them to engage in mission work. Jessie Brown concluded her remarks by declaring that "whatever educates women thus, educates the entire church."⁵

This assessment was not shared by church conservatives. For essentially theological reasons, a minority voice within the Disciple movement questioned all missionary societies. To them, a female dominated missionary society simply compounded the heresy. Speaking the mind of this element, David Lipscomb propounded: "Every man who encourages [the Christian Woman's Board of Missions] works against God, the church, womanhood, the interest of the family, motherhood, and against true manhood itself."⁶ A vast intellectual chasm separated Jessie H. Brown and her associates from the venerable Gospel Advocate editor. Their radically divergent points of view evolved out of church problems indigenous to the Disciples of Christ and also out of the larger cultural question of woman's social status.

The CWBM and its importance to woman's changing position in society must be viewed against the background of the mis-

⁵Jessie H. Brown, "The C. W. B. M. as an Educator," MT, X (December, 1892), 28.

⁶David Lipscomb, "Woman and her Work," GA, XXXIV (October 13, 1892), 644.

sionary controversy within the Disciple movement. Until the end of the 1830's, Alexander Campbell's restoration plea called for a rejection of all man-made religious creeds and extra-congregational organizations. He and his followers affirmed that the first century church practiced radical congregational autonomy. However, by 1842 Campbell's theology had evolved to the point that he was willing to accept limited cooperation between individual churches. This eventually led to the creation of the American Christian Missionary Society (ACMS) in 1849. Although it sponsored a few overseas evangelists, the remonstrances of church conservatives kept it from prospering until well after the Civil War.⁷

Prior to 1860, conservative Disciples objected to extra-congregational societies for essentially three reasons:

(1) the conviction that human ecclesiastical organizations were unauthorized in the scriptures; (2) the potential danger that societies might infringe upon local congregational independence; and (3) the anxiety that such an organization might inject politics into this religious movement. The last argument was of particular importance to southern Disciples who feared abolitionist sympathies among their northern brethren. Antebellum conservatives developed sufficient strength to cripple but never to kill the ACMS. In fact, some of those

⁷Bill J. Humble, "The Missionary Society Controversy in the Restoration Movement (1823-1875)" (Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1964), 78-132 passim.

who would most strongly oppose the society after the Civil War supported it prior to 1861.⁸ A youthful David Lipscomb, for example, served as the corresponding secretary for a small district convention in Tennessee.⁹

Events associated with the Civil War changed conservative fears of the missionary society into adamant opposition. During the years of conflict, anti-slavery Disciples urged the annual convention of the American Christian Missionary Society to pass a resolution supporting the northern war effort. Emboldened by their pleas, the society in 1863 championed the Union cause in its conflict with "armed traitors [attempting] to overthrow our government." The passage of this political resolution gave conservatives from Ohio to Tennessee an issue with which to attack the society. When the war ended, southern Disciples followed the lead of the church's conservatives in not supporting the ACMS.¹⁰

The decade from 1865 to 1874 was particularly grim for the organization. Faced with widespread church apathy toward its work, the society was unable adequately to support foreign missions. In 1869, the ACMS reorganized around what was called the "Louisville Plan" in hopes of raising funds

⁸Ibid., 162-64, 177-89; Murch, Christians Only, 186.

⁹West, David Lipscomb, 60-61.

¹⁰Humble, "Missionary Society Controversy," 211-18.

more efficiently. It was a dismal failure. In the decade prior to this, the society had raised an average of \$10,000 annually. For the next ten years it received only about \$4,000 per year.¹¹ Given this bleak situation, pro-society Disciples began to look to their sisters with the hope that they might revitalize the church's lagging missionary spirit.

As early as 1869, these Disciples were impressed with the success of female missionary organizations among the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists. That year, Isaac Errett published one of the earliest pleas for an expanded role for Disciple women. "An immense proportion of the Church's power for good is lost," he suggested, "by the false public sentiment which forbids the active employment of woman's gift in the service of God." He then reprinted a lengthy article demonstrating the good work of Methodist church women in Philadelphia.¹² Although Errett was one of the more forceful supporters of the ACMS, the initial push to secure a woman's missionary society was primarily the work of Thomas Munnell (1823-1898).

An Ohio Disciple, Munnell was the corresponding secretary for the American Christian Missionary Society from 1869

¹¹Ibid., 281-94; Grant K. Lewis, The American Christian Missionary Society and the Disciples of Christ (St. Louis, 1937), 204.

¹²Isaac Errett, "Woman's Work," CS, IV (March 6, 1869), 76.

to 1877. He placed the question of woman's missionary opportunities before the society and his spade work prepared the Disciples to accept the creation of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions in 1874. Nonetheless, Munnell's efforts demonstrate the limited concept that he and other leaders of the Christian Church had about woman's ability and social status in the early 1870's.

In October, 1869, he published an extended paper outlining his perception of woman's work in the church. The entire article was colored by the rationale of true womanhood. He believed strongly that mankind was divided into hemispheres and that the half occupied by women required them to be modest and deferential. In his mind, the church, the government, and "any man fit to be a husband" had no use for a "'strong-minded' woman" who sought masculine rights and privileges. The "distinction marked out, both by nature and revelation," Munnell declared, "involves distinctive duties for each [sex], among which voting, holding political and military offices, public preaching, and baptizing certainly do not belong to women." Nonetheless, this Disciple envisioned a positive church posture for his sisters. Woman could make her influence felt in "Sunday schools, social meetings, Bible class," and, in a forthright manner, she could go from door to door "raising money for missionary and

other benevolent objects."¹³

In his paper, Munnell expounded upon the missionary opportunities open to the female sex. He suggested that "if we desire modern [examples] of what woman can do in the Gospel of Christ, look at the missionary women in the Orient." Because there female missionaries could enter homes which were by custom closed to strange males, they did a wonderful work among the natives. This Disciple pointed out that Protestant women taught religion to eastern families, read the scriptures to them, distributed tracts, and instructed "the heathen women in the knowledge of God." Believing that women out numbered men two to one in this mission effort, he finished his discourse by asking when the Christian Church would discover woman's innate power and invite her "into these many fields of usefulness."¹⁴

At the urging of Munnell, a "Committee on the Co-operation of Women in the Missionary Work" presented a favorable resolution at the ACMS convention in Indianapolis in October, 1870.¹⁵ Noting that the "Woman's Board of Missions in certain denominations" had "set a noble example to our sisters," the committee admonished that they "become missionaries at

¹³Thomas Munnell, "Woman's Work in the Church," CQ, I (October, 1869), 521-22.

¹⁴Ibid., 520, 523.

¹⁵Thomas Munnell, "Those Women Who Labor with Me in the Gospel," CS, V (October 8, 1870), 322.

home and abroad." Furthermore, the resolution suggested that Disciple women ought to dispense with "costly apparel, release themselves from the slavery of fashion," and use their financial resources for the expansion of the gospel. The memorial closed with a panegyric to true womanhood: "If men rule the world, the women rule the men; and if both shall feel their own personal responsibility to Christ, the desert will blossom as the rose, and all flesh will see the salvation of God." The resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the novelty of this proposal was evident. The Indianapolis Daily Sentinel reported that the "document provoked considerable merriment and many humorous remarks from Thomas Munnell, of Ohio; George Campbell, of Illinois; [and] James Smiley of Indiana."¹⁷ Munnell and his fellow male Disciples could only accept a female missionary society if they indicated man's superiority over woman through a satire of woman's church role.

Despite the levity associated with the memorial, Munnell made a good faith effort to develop a woman's missionary organization. In December, he published an appeal to the sisters encouraging them to establish congregational societies

¹⁶Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Anniversary Meeting of the American Christian Missionary Society, Held in Indianapolis, Indiana, October 18, 19, and 20, 1870 (Cincinnati, 1870), 23.

¹⁷Indianapolis Daily Sentinel, October 21, 1870.

and suggesting how district and state conventions could be created. In January, 1871, he corresponded with Miss Z. E. Wood imploring her to work as a paid organizer in this project. However, little came of either effort.¹⁸

The question of beginning a woman's missionary society came before the ACMS convention again the following year. Although this meeting failed to come any closer to establishing such a society for the sisters, the speeches favoring it give some insight to woman's image among the liberal members of this religious movement. Without exception each paid tribute to true womanhood. James Challen believed woman's "peculiarly fitting place was in the church." W. C. Dawson expressed thanks for "the pure, sweet and devoted spirits, the representatives of angels here on earth, who had worked with him." With faith that woman possessed "more fervor of spirit and deeper devotion of piety," J. J. Moss insisted "that she might wake up the dull souls of the brethren." He personally believed that women could preach, but he condemned the concept that women ought to be in politics. Moss regarded female suffrage "as infidelity to God and to the Bible." J. B. New urged young preachers to select a good missionary woman for a wife, but also to "not forget that she

¹⁸Thomas Munnell, "Christian Missions--Woman's Work," ACR, XIII (December 13, 1870), 397; *ibid.*, E, V (December 23, 1870), 10; *ibid.*, CS, VI (January 21, 1871), 19; Thomas Munnell, "The Tap-root of the C. W. B. M.," CE, XXV (June 23, 1898), 397.

should be a good housekeeper." Inevitably, the discussion closed with a male evangelist eulogizing his mother. B. U. Watkins recalled that his father's powerful prayers never moved him. But when he knelt beside his mother's chair and she prayed over him, it was as if a plow had lacerated "his heart, making him feel how wicked a man he had been."¹⁹

Pro-society, ecumenical Disciples were on record favoring a woman's missionary organization. Doubtless had they known in the early 1870's the changes which the Christian Woman's Board of Missions would bring for their sisters, these males would have dampened their ardor. However, the altering of woman's status through the agency of the CWBM was an evolutionary process. By the time the Disciple sisters emerged out of the passive role of remaining in the home to the active role of preaching the gospel, most of their liberal brethren accepted as natural the transformation. With rare exception, only the anti-society, evangelistic churchmen bewailed this modification in woman's cultural position.

Whatever desire Isaac Errett and Thomas Munnell had for the establishment of a woman's missionary board, the overwhelming problems of the ACMS occupied their full attention. It remained for a dedicated Disciple sister to instigate the formation of such a society. Caroline Neville Pearre (1831-

¹⁹Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Anniversary Meeting of the General Missionary Convention Held in Cincinnati, October 19, 20, 21, and 23, 1871 (Cincinnati, 1871), 60-65.

1910) was the catalyst for the establishment of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions.

A woman of learning and piety, by the late 1860's Caroline Neville taught at the Madison Female Institute, a Disciple college in Kentucky. There she met a minister, Dr. S. E. Pearre, and they married in 1869.²⁰ A short time later, they moved to Iowa City, Iowa, where she became increasingly distressed at the lack of missionary spirit among Christian Church women. Mrs. Pearre's friendship with Mary Thacher, the spouse of the president of the University of Iowa, heightened her desire to engage in mission work. As an officer in the recently formed Congregationalist Woman's Board of Missions, Mrs. Thacher shared with the minister's wife letters she received from her church's missionaries from Mexico and Persia. Mrs. Pearre later recalled the profound sadness she felt because her church had no part in these works. In her words: "My heart began to stir; I wanted to be in it." On the morning of April 10, 1874, Caroline Pearre finished her daily devotional and then determined to lead Disciple women into the mission work.²¹

She wrote immediately to Thomas Munnell, who replied that "this is a flame of the Lord's kindling, and no man can extinguish it." He provided both encouragement and a list of

²⁰Lollis, The Shape of Adam's Rib, 30.

²¹Caroline N. Pearre, "Our Beginning," MT, XVII (August, 1899), 102-3.

important individuals to contact. Among these were the editors Isaac Errett and James H. Garrison, and several interested women in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio.²² Of particular importance was her correspondence with the ladies' aid society of the Central Christian Church in Indianapolis. That active group included in its membership both Marcia Goodwin and Zeralda Wallace, the latter the widow of a former Indiana governor and the stepmother of Lew Wallace, author of Ben Hur. By means of their influence, Indianapolis became the national headquarters of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions.²³

Perhaps because of the friendship between the Pearres and the Thachers, Isaac Errett was invited to address the June graduates of the University of Iowa. While in Iowa City, he stayed at the Pearre home and became increasingly enthusiastic about Caroline Pearre's ideas. Before he left, Errett mailed to the Christian Standard an editorial urging the sisters to convene in Cincinnati when the ACMS held its annual meeting in October. This article's title, "Help Those Women," became the rallying cry for the first woman's convention among the

²²Ida W. Harrison, Forty Years of Service: A History of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, 1874-1914 (n.p., [1914]), 21.

²³Commodore W. Cauble, Disciples of Christ in Indiana: Achievements of a Century (Indianapolis, 1930), 223, 230. The monthly meetings of the CWBM executive committee were frequently held in the homes of Zerelda Wallace and Marcia Goodwin. Minutes of the executive board of the CWBM, 1875-1878, passim, typescripts, CWBM Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

Disciples of Christ.²⁴ Errett conveyed his "perfect sympathy with the objects of this movement." He professed to "see in it the dawn of a new era of activity and spiritual growth for Christian women," who he believed possessed "an immense wealth of resources hitherto largely neglected." This effort would not only benefit foreign missions, but also uplift the spirit of womankind. Stating his distaste for those who attacked "female vanity, frivolity, pride and extravagance," he expressed his desire to see this missionary agency bring about "a [grander] development of womanly grace, dignity and strength."²⁵

For the next several months additional articles of support were written by Errett in the Christian Standard, Garrison in the Christian, Munnell in the Christian Record, and Marcia Goodwin in the Christian Monitor.²⁶ In September, Mrs. Goodwin editorialized: "Dear sisters, while the brethren are talking about women's work in the church, show them that

²⁴Lois A. White, "Reformation of the Nineteenth Century, Nine Decades of History," CE, XXXVI (December 7, 1899), 1544-45.

²⁵Isaac Errett, "Help Those Women," CS, IX (July 11, 1874), 220.

²⁶Isaac Errett, "Woman's Work," ibid. (September 19, 1874), 301; Thomas Munnell, "The General Convention," CR, 5th ser., I (September, 1874), 424; Marcia M. B. Goodwin, "Talks to Monitor People," CM, XIII (September, 1874), 428; ibid. (October, 1874), 477; Lollis, The Shape of Adam's Rib, 31. The Christian for 1874 is no longer extant.

you know what it is by doing it."²⁷ With such encouragement seventy-five Disciple women gathered in the basement of the Richmond Street Christian Church on October 21, 1874.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Pearre, the convention drew up a constitution modeled on the woman's missionary society of the Congregational Church. The following day, the American Christian Missionary Society extended recognition to the newly formed Christian Woman's Board of Missions. Then in a joint session, the delegates of both societies listened to addresses given by Caroline Pearre and Marcia Goodwin.²⁸ Significantly, both women used the rhetoric of true womanhood.

Caroline Pearre looked upon the creation of the woman's missionary board as a "joyous hour." Not only did she believe that the organization of "thousands of Christian women's hearts" would result in the propagation of the gospel, but she also saw it as improving woman's status in the home and in the church. "Let our women be vitalized by this work," she proclaimed, "and a deeper earnestness and devotion will be manifested" in the churches. Moments later she again emphasized "let women be vitalized by this work, and there will be a deeper and broader Christian influence in the home circle."²⁹

²⁷Marcia M. B. Goodwin, "Talks to Monitor People," CM, XIII (September, 1874), 428.

²⁸Lollis, The Shape of Adam's Rib, 32-33.

²⁹Caroline N. Pearre, "Woman's Mission Work," CS, IX (November 21, 1874), 369.

To this Disciple sister, woman's traditional position in the religious and domestic spheres would be enhanced by the new movement.

Marcia Goodwin's speech justified woman's role in the CWBM as a natural outgrowth of her character. "While the peace and loveliness of the home-circle . . . must remain uncontaminated," she declared, "the element of love, which underlies and sustains it, is the germ from which shall spring . . . our responsibility to our fellow men." Referring to motherhood, she condemned the man who scorned woman's church work because in doing so he uttered "maledictions upon the hand that supported his feebleness." The entire talk emphasized woman's positive possibilities within the church. According to Mrs. Goodwin, woman, who "imbued her mind with Bible truths," and who had "her heart . . . filled with longings for the world's salvation," had every right to express her emotions. Still, she assured her brothers that few sisters desired to stand behind the "sacred desk" and to preach. Instead, mission women would set pious examples for their husbands, their children, and their neighbors.³⁰ The convention closed and the CWBM quickly began a program that would in the next twenty-five years raise over three-quarters

³⁰Marcia M. B. Goodwin, "An Address Read Before the Christian Missionary Convention at Cincinnati, Ohio, October 22, 1874," CM, XIII (December, 1874), 542-43.

of a million dollars for mission work.³¹

Initially there was little opposition to the "sister's movement" in the Disciple press. Possibly anti-society churchmen were so opposed to extra-congregational organizations that they deemed their attacks upon the ACMS sufficient to cover the new creation. In addition, the early thrust of the CWBM did not threaten woman's traditional roles as wife and mother. By 1887, the conservative evangelist John T. Poe repented of his early support of the CWBM and became a fervent opponent. He insisted that he had been "misled in the belief that it was an innocent and harmless 'society' of sisters working through the church only."³² In 1874, however, the only substantial criticism came in the form of an otherwise favorable editorial in the Apostolic Times. It praised the creation of the CWBM and complimented the speeches of both Caroline Pearre and Marcia Goodwin. Nonetheless, the paper noted that "Sister Goodwin came very near treading on forbidden ground in regards to female preachers, but she spared the Apostle Paul." The editorialist trusted that "her gifted pen [would] never be found in conflict with" the prohibition of woman's sermonizing.³³ Here was a harbinger of

³¹Lollis, The Shape of Adam's Rib, 38.

³²John T. Poe, "The C. W. B. M.," GA, XXIX (September 28, 1887), 617.

³³"The General Missionary Convention," AT, VI (October 29, 1874), 4.

future problems.

For almost the next decade the CWBM escaped effective criticism because it emphasized the conventional concepts of true womanhood. Speaking before a Kentucky society in 1876, Mrs. M. K. C. Clay complained that a few male critics had accused her sisters of supporting "Woman's Rights." How could these men, she inquired, believe that in "Kentucky there were any Christian women committed to that doctrine that displaces woman from her God-given sphere, or would degrade her to the accidents that belong to the ballot box."³⁴ After attending a CWBM meeting in 1877, another Disciple sister observed that "women, in quiet, womanly ways in very many churches . . . are doing a great work [teaching] in their families . . . how to give and do for others."³⁵ Even as late as 1883, the generally conservative American Christian Review praised this work of the sisters. Noting that women's emotional natures often made them "better workers for the salvation of sinners than men," it found in the CWBM "no extravagance, nothing revolutionary or radical." The paper continued: "A higher sense of the duties and responsibilities of wifehood and motherhood must prevail with every woman

³⁴Mrs. M. K. C. Clay, "Address Before the Woman's Christian Missionary Society of Kentucky by its President," ibid., VIII (September 21, 1876), 596.

³⁵Marie E. Cole, "Minutes of the W. B. Missions," CM, XVI (September, 1877), 418.

that thus labors in Christian work."³⁶ Only when it became clear that the CWBM was leading women out of the home and into the pulpit did the anti-society Disciples severely censure this "sister's movement."

The Christian Woman's Board of Missions provided for Disciple women an avenue by which they could make an active contribution to society at large. As such it became an agency through which the passive virtues of true womanhood evolved into the active contributions of the "new" woman. By means of this organization, numerous Christian Church women gained the experience of participating in church polity, speaking before audiences, and in a few cases even laboring in foreign and domestic mission fields. As a result these women gained greater self-confidence and developed a higher image of their own self-worth. As for male Disciples, the sight of modest Christian women using their special virtues outside of the home circle was most impressive.

Liberal Disciples allowed their missionary sisters to "lecture" before mixed audiences. Evidently a distinction was made between woman's exhorting the brethren on missionary responsibility from the lecture platform and her standing behind the Sunday pulpit and preaching about the "Great Commission." Conservative, anti-society churchmen do not seem to have readily grasped the subtlety involved in this activity,

³⁶"Christian Women," ACR, XXVI (May 3, 1883), 139.

and none raised a voice against it until after 1885.³⁷ Even Mrs. Alexander Campbell, who feared the CWBM might lead to woman's preaching, asked "not to be understood to say, that it would be wrong for women to lecture, or make an address, under all circumstances."³⁸ Nonetheless, early in the 1880's there were clear signs that through the agency of the CWBM, woman would eventually obtain clerical privileges. Most notable of those pointing the way was the editor of the Christian Monitor.

Marcia Goodwin was among the avant-garde within the CWBM leadership. In 1881, she published in the Christian Standard a series of articles strongly advocating woman's right to the pulpit. The first took the form of an anthropomorphic parable centering around the misadventures of a "gentle, lady-like" Bantam hen. Thrilled by the beauty of a spring day, she crowed! Profound shock and consternation reigned in the chicken coop. Immediately the roosters bemoaned this departure from female decorum: "'Hens haven't any right to crow!' 'Hens are made to take care of the chickens!' 'Their eggs will be ruined while they forsake home duties!' '. . . she'll put revolutionary notions into the heads of the young pullets,

³⁷For example, John W. McGarvey remained a foe of woman's ordination throughout his life, but he praised the addresses given by the sisters at missionary conventions. McGarvey, "The General Convention," AT, IX (November 9, 1877), 680.

³⁸Mrs. Alexander Campbell to Mrs. J. M. Mathes, CM, XVIII (May, 1879), 150.

and make them un-henly.'" A mass rally was quickly organized in which the basic tenets of a true hen's behavior were detailed. "Hens," one rooster affirmed, "should be made to understand that they must stick to their proper sphere! If they want to know anything let them ask their husbands at home." There followed a series of resolutions mandating the proper behavior of model "henhood." Chastised by this experience, the modest Bantam never again crowed for the joy of a lovely day.³⁹

Marcia Goodwin's message was perfectly clear and it elicited several bitter replies from her brethren. In one of these a farmer from Sullivan, Indiana, quoted to her the ancient couplet: "A whistling girl and a crowing hen / Always come to the same bad end."⁴⁰ Infuriated, she promptly wrote two additional articles for the Christian Standard. "A woman may live an idle, useless life, or devote her days to fashion and folly," she observed, "and she will be applauded for having kept her 'proper sphere.'" But let the same woman study the Bible and "publicly proclaim its truth . . . and sneers and calumny are her portions." Referring to the "sacred desk" of preaching, this female editor believed that women sought it for "the most pure and conscientious motives."

³⁹Marcia M. B. Goodwin, "From My Standpoint," CS, XVI (April 2, 1881), 107.

⁴⁰Joseph W. Wolfe, "Olla Podria (Not Editorial) for Mrs. M. M. B. Goodwin," ibid. (April 23, 1881), 130.

She condemned those males who spoke of the "immodesty of woman's preaching," because it belittled "not only the sex, but Christianity itself" and thus struck "a blow at the foundation of all purity." She believed that women, who were "able . . . to stand before the world as preachers of the gospel," deserved the highest admiration.⁴¹ Marcia Goodwin's ideas were ten years in advance of the Disciple movement. Shortly after the appearance of these articles, both her health and the health of her husband deteriorated significantly and her voice was muted.⁴²

Although Marcia Goodwin argued with passion for woman's right to the pulpit, none successfully stepped forward to claim the honor.⁴³ For those few Disciple women who desired publicly to proclaim the gospel, the lecture platform provided an effective substitute. Persis L. Christian (ca. 1840-1918) of Chicago, and later Eureka Springs, Arkansas, was one of the Disciples' most popular female speakers. Although a charter member of the national CWBM, her greatest period of

⁴¹Marcia M. B. Goodwin, "From My Standpoint," ibid. (June 4, 1881), 178; ibid. (June 11, 1881), 186.

⁴²"The Death of Mrs. M. M. B. Goodwin," CC, XXIV (April, 1885), 157; Sarah E. Shortridge, "Death of Sister Goodwin," MT, II (April, 1885), 2.

⁴³In 1880, Mary B. Carney claimed in the American Christian Review to be holding a pulpit with her husband in Lewis County, Kentucky. The newspaper took a negative view of her activities and she was never recognized in any of the other Disciple papers. J. A. Meng, "A New Sensation," ACR, XXIII (January 13, 1880), 9; Mary B. Carney, "Woman's

activity for the society was between 1884 and 1893.⁴⁴ Her life and philosophy demonstrated the evolution of Disciple sisters from the cult of true womanhood to the "new" woman.

The daughter of a village physician in Illinois, Persis Lemon married George C. Christian in 1866. Shortly thereafter they moved to Chicago where he became active in the Prohibition Party. In the 1880's, he served as its state chairman and in 1884, he placed in nomination its presidential candidate. In addition, George Christian was a pillar in the local congregation of the Disciples of Christ.⁴⁵ Persis Christian shared with her husband a passion for both temperance and the church. By the late 1880's she was concentrating most of her energy on developing the Illinois CWBM. As state president, she diligently sought to start new local chapters and to strengthen existing societies.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, her articles in the Christian Standard made it clear that the prohibition cause was always close to her heart.⁴⁷ In 1889,

Question, by a Woman," ibid. (February 3, 1880), 34; Mary B. Carney, "Letter from Sister Carney," ibid. (March 23, 1880), 91.

⁴⁴"Mrs. Persis L. Christian," CE, LV (September 19, 1913), 991.

⁴⁵D. W. Moore, "George C. Christian," CS, XXXVI (June 22, 1901), 795.

⁴⁶Persis L. Christian, "C. W. B. M., Duties of District and County Managers," ibid., XXIII (February 2, 1889), 68.

⁴⁷Persis L. Christian, "Temperance Movement," ibid., XVII (November 25, 1882), 375; Persis L. Christian, "Christian

however, her husband's failing health forced them to seek the more temperate environment of the Ozark community of Eureka Springs. Cut off from her former base of activity in Chicago, she agreed to become a national lecturer for the CWBM.⁴⁸

In August, 1890, she spoke before the missionary society's state convention in Iowa. Using the flowery language of Victorian sentimentality, one of the participants suggested that her success and popularity as a speaker resulted from her womanly demeanor. Noting that Persis Christian "opens her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness," the writer indicated that "as a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."⁴⁹ This author admired her because of her feminine attributes.

During the following two years, Persis Christian traveled throughout the region from Missouri to Pennsylvania and from Illinois to Tennessee. Her lectures expounded upon the importance of church missions, but she also encouraged temperance, advocated woman suffrage, and hinted that women ought to occupy the pulpit. Like most proponents of the "new" woman, however, she retained a faith in her sex's domestic felicity.

Missions and the Liquor Traffic," ibid., XXII (September 17, 1887), 298, 304.

⁴⁸"Editorial Odds and Ends," CO, VII (November 6, 1890), 716; Mrs. Otis A. Burgess, untitled notice, MT, VIII (December, 1890), 19.

⁴⁹"Iowa C. W. B. M. Convention at Des Moines, August 20, 1890," ibid., 21.

"Women," she insisted, "have no more important duty than preparation for the management of the home."⁵⁰

Church liberals responded positively to Persis Christian, As early as 1888, an Ohio Disciple believed her power as a speaker was due to her "womanly and refined manner which [wins] the hearts of her auditors."⁵¹ In 1891, others of her religious fellowship echoed that view. Shortly after her four-day series of lectures in Liberty, Missouri, a male Disciple wrote a letter of praise to the Christian-Evangelist. "Several distinguished ladies, such as Susan B. Anthony and Phoebe Cousins" had lectured in this small city, but to him "none of them left such a favorable impression on the public mind as Persis L. Christian." He added that as "an intelligent, cultivated and all around Christian, womanly woman she stands at the head of the list."⁵² Similar compliments were expressed by liberal Disciples after her visits to Bloomington, Illinois, and Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.⁵³

⁵⁰Persis L. Christian, "The Ethics of Housekeeping," CS, XXVIII (January 23, 1892), 85.

⁵¹Jessie H. Brown, "The Work of the C. W. B. M. in Ohio," ibid., XXIII (June 16, 1888), 374.

⁵²A. B. Jones, "Persis L. Christian," CE, XXVIII (February 12, 1891), 105; ibid., MT, VIII (March, 1891), 5.

⁵³M. M. C., "Mrs. Christian's Lectures and the C. W. B. M. Institute at Bloomington, Illinois," CE, XXVIII (April 19, 1891), 236; "Our General Conventions," CO, VIII (October 29, 1891), 690.

Persis Christian's view of woman's active role in society through voting and preaching would have been largely unacceptable to her liberal brethren twenty years earlier. However, the reality of a modest, "womanly" sister advocating the ballot box and the pulpit for her sex made these ideas seem less radical. Both by example and advocacy, Persis Christian, and a few others like her, called for the expansion of woman's domain by using logic derived from the cult of true womanhood.

For a handful of Disciple women, service in the mission field provided an opportunity actively to aid humanity. A few women were employed by the CWBM to work among the freedmen in Mississippi, to teach school in Jamaica, and to convert the pagans in Japan and India. The CWBM mission to India was of special interest to them. The society's leaders looked upon it as a unique woman's work among oriental women.

The CWBM saw in India a chance not only to spread the gospel, but also to improve the status of eastern womanhood. As early as 1877, a plea was published in the Christian Monitor calling for Disciple women to go to the Orient. The article suggested that there "customs have shut women, as thinking beings away from men: so if we their sisters, go not to them, they perish in their idolatry."⁵⁴ Caroline

⁵⁴Mrs. N. E. Atkinson, "A Plea for the C. W. Board of Missions," CM, XVI (April, 1877), 173.

Pearre took up this theme. Speaking before a Kentucky CWBM convention, she observed with disdain: "If we were oriental women, we might recline on our cushions and tinkle our ornaments, and sip our coffee and drowse away our inane lives." But, she insisted, since American women were products of a higher culture, they were responsible for developing the interest of civilization throughout the world.⁵⁵ Continuing that theme, several Christian Church women contrasted the rights of their sex in a "free and enlightened America" to the tragic circumstances of Indian women. CWBM speakers pictured the subcontinent a woman's purgatory where daughters were "drowned in innocent babyhood," where young girls were sold into prostitution, and where wives were trapped in the "zenana or harem."⁵⁶ Persis Christian was especially concerned. Addressing a CWBM convention in Illinois, she proclaimed that "to us, as women, the condition of the women particularly appeals." She could hardly imagine the degraded condition of such women who from mother to daughter had "been only a beast of burden," who had been denied "the affection of a parent to child," and who had "no knowledge

⁵⁵Caroline N. Pearre, "Woman's Mission Work," CS, XVII (October 7, 1882), 313.

⁵⁶Mrs. W. C. Weedon, "Woman's Work in Missions," ibid., XIII (June 15, 1878), 189; "Woman's Opportunity," CC, XXIV (November, 1885), 350; Ella B. Myles, "Christian Woman's Mission," ibid., XXVI (February, 1887), 77; Jennie L. Ogg, "Woman--Her Relation to Missions," MT, IX (February, 1892), 13.

of freedom of will or action." Christian women, she averred, must enter "the gates of [their] prison, carrying hope and salvation."⁵⁷

Given this interest, several young women volunteered to undertake the Asian work. By 1887, a girl's school had been established in Bilaspur, India, and other Disciple women were organizing mission stations in the same region. One of these attracted attention in the American press.⁵⁸ In the summer of 1889, Harper's Bazar praised the accomplishments of Miss Mary Graybiel, "a missionary sent out by the Church of the Disciples." Without the help of a white male, this young missionary supervised the construction of a sizable church building. The periodical noted that she served as her own architect, her own purchasing agent, and her own contractor. She hired "a hundred natives" and taught some "to make brick [and] others to quarry stone." When the building was completed, she had proven "herself a person equal to emergencies that would appal [sic] some men." Harper's Bazar concluded: "We are proud of [Miss Graybiel] as a woman of thrift, tact and great executive ability and glad that she

⁵⁷Persis L. Christian, "Christian Missions," CS, XIX (September 20, 1884), 297. CWBM activities in India parallel the action of Protestant missionary women who were trying to gain the right of suffrage for women in China. Jerry Israel, "'For God, for China and for Yale'--The Open Door in Action," American Historical Review, LXXV (February, 1970), 805-6.

⁵⁸Zoe L. Tedrowe, "C. W. B. M.," CM, XXI (March, 1882), 125; editorial, CC, XXVI (May, 1887), 177.

calls our land her home."⁵⁹

Given the efforts of missionary women to improve the status of their sex in other lands, American Disciples began to question woman's limited rights in their own country. In 1888, Mrs. Julia Bosworth asked in the Christian-Evangelist "why it was wrong for a woman to . . . preach in her native land . . . and yet it is all right for her to cross an ocean . . . to teach and preach the same gospel." Like others in the CWBM, Julia Bosworth concluded that women ought "to preach or do 'whatsoever their hands find to do' in America."⁶⁰

By the 1890's, liberal Disciples had become accustomed to seeing missionary women take an active role in church affairs. Thus when Clara Babcock became their first ordained minister, a majority within the Christian Church was prepared to accept her. Almost alone among the liberals, John B. Briney of Knoxville protested Babcock's "innovation." Writing in February, 1892, in the Christian Standard, he condemned the heresy of woman's preaching and called for its end while "the practice [was] merely in the bud."⁶¹ The intensity of negative response to his articles must have surprised this powerful preacher.

⁵⁹Harper's Bazar, June 29, 1889, reprinted in MT, VII (August, 1889), 8.

⁶⁰Julia M. Bosworth, "The Other Side," CE, XXV (August 30, 1888), 542.

⁶¹John B. Briney, "Paul and Women," CS, XXVIII (February 13, 1892), 136; ibid. (February 27, 1892), 182.

Within a week after Briney's articles were published, the Christian Standard editors reported receiving "a small battalion" of replies challenging him and more "reinforcements" were arriving daily. "The Ladies," warned the paper, "are on the warpath."⁶² Throughout the remainder of 1892 and for most of 1893, Briney found himself overwhelmed in both the Christian Standard and the Christian-Evangelist by scores of women's preaching advocates.⁶³ Only one other liberal Disciple defended his position.⁶⁴ Most of Briney's critics affirmed that the church needed the special attributes which womankind possessed. A church majority agreed with H. Milner Black, a minister who wrote for the Christian-Evangelist, that the Disciples of Christ could do without "feminine men

⁶²Editorial comment, ibid. (March 5, 1892), 211. Taking note of this warning, Briney suggested "that probably the prayer path would be the softer one to travel in search of the true solution of the question in hand." As would be expected, his critics assured him of their fidelity to the "prayer path." John B. Briney, "'Paul and Women' and 'Jairus,'" ibid. (March 26, 1892), 277; Jairus, "'Paul and Women'--and Briney," ibid. (April 16, 1892), 383; M. B. L., "Open Letter to Bros. Hayden and Briney," ibid. (October 8, 1892), 855.

⁶³See both the Christian Standard and the Christian-Evangelist for 1892-1893 passim. Forty-two articles in the Christian Standard and sixteen articles in the Christian-Evangelist expressed solidarity with women preachers.

⁶⁴M. P. Hayden, "Have Women a Right to be Preachers," CS, XXVIII (April 9, 1892), 316; M. P. Hayden, "Women Pastors and Evangelists," ibid. (June 4, 17, 24, 1892), 450, 470, 490; M. P. Hayden, "Rejoinder to the Girls," ibid. (July 8, 1892), 545; M. P. Hayden, "Reply to G. T. Smith," ibid., XXIX (July 29, November 4, 1893), 591, 879; M. P. Hayden, "Women in the Ministry," ibid. (September 9, 1893), 718; M. P. Hayden, "Reply to John Kline," ibid. (September 23, 1893), 758;

and masculine women," but it desperately needed "the tender and pathetic womanly presentation of the gospel, to reach some hearts which were well nigh putrefied."⁶⁵

Womanly virtues exemplified by the CWBM convinced liberal Disciples that their sisters deserved a more positive church and social posture. Their conservative brethren, however, failed to support the missionary society and as would be expected did not significantly modify their concept of woman's role either in religion or in the world at large. Strangely, the conservative press virtually ignored the progress of this woman's missionary organization. Although a few negative remarks appeared as early as 1885, there was no consistent attack upon the CWBM until it directly threatened David Lipscomb's sphere of influence in the early 1890's.

While anti-society Disciples failed to mount a sustained assault upon the CWBM, a few scattered remarks in their religious journals suggested the tenor of their thoughts. Without exception the published comments of conservatives censored the active "new" woman. Writing in the Firm Foundation for 1886, "Sarai" criticized those women who desired to "leave home and children and lecture on temperance and preach, etc." To those who believed such women achieved "much good by their

M. P. Hayden, "Condition of Woman in Paul's Day," ibid. (December 23, 1893), 1020.

⁶⁵H. Milner Black, "How to Win the Men," CE, XXXI (April 19, 1893), 246.

public efforts," she replied that "infinitely much more good would [be accomplished] by staying at home and making happiness for husband and children."⁶⁶ Three years later, she condemned thoroughly those missionary women who were "deeply absorbed in the heathen of Borrioboola-gha, while their own children roam the streets at will and their husbands seek in the club room the company and comfort denied them at home."⁶⁷ Amanda Bostick, a frequent contributor to the Gospel Advocate, held to a similar position. She was highly critical of missionary societies which demand "all the time and thoughts of mothers, to the neglect of the spiritual training of the children." To her, women's organizations were the source of rising juvenile delinquency.⁶⁸ Neither of these women had faith in the concept of "organized motherlove."

Other attacks upon the CWBM, and women's missionary societies, can only be described as occasional sniping. In 1885, an unidentified conservative accused such women of hypocrisy because they espoused love for foreign missions while ignoring those without the gospel at home.⁶⁹ Both Sarai and John T. Poe believed that sewing circles and Dorcas societies denied

⁶⁶Sarai, "Talks with the Sisters," FF, II (August, 1886), 4.

⁶⁷Ibid., V (January 15, 1889), 1.

⁶⁸Amanda Bostick, "Lois and Eunice," GA, XXXII (February 19, 1890), 120.

⁶⁹C., "Woman as a Missionary," ibid., XXVII (July 15, 1885), 442.

an income to poor women who desperately needed the money which the society sisters obtained from quilt and bonnet making.⁷⁰ And at least one conservative critic hinted that missionary women took on masculine characteristics. At an Arkansas CWBM convention, he listened to the speeches of a husband-wife team just returned from India. "Sister M.," he suggested, "was the best man (?) of the two."⁷¹ If these attacks seem petty, the intensity of anti-CWBM feeling would become evident when the society held its national convention in Nashville in October, 1892.

Largely due to the influence of David Lipscomb, Tennessee Disciples only weakly supported missionary societies. Throughout the 1880's, Christian Church mission projects received only a few hundred dollars annually from the entire state. The CWBM had no support at all. Given that situation, Mrs. Alexander Campbell suggested in 1886, that "the Gospel Advocate of Nashville [should] let its loving voice . . . be heard" supporting missions in "that section over which it holds great sway."⁷² Lipscomb ignored her.

⁷⁰Sarai, "Talks with the Sisters," FF, I (May, 1885), 13; John T. Poe, "Woman's Aid Societies and the Church," GA, XXXVI (October 25, 1894), 680.

⁷¹J. G. Conner, "The C. W. B. M., A. C. M. S., and A. C. S. S. C.," FF, VIII (July 5, 1892), 3.

⁷²Mrs. Alexander Campbell, "Letter from Sister Campbell," MT, III (February, 1886), 3.

The events leading to Lipscomb's strong denunciation of the CWBM in 1892 had begun five years before. In October, 1887, a pro-society evangelist held a meeting at Nashville's Woodland Street Christian Church and shortly afterwards its women organized a missionary auxiliary. With the blessing of three of the congregation's four elders, the women sent out fifty letters to Tennessee churches calling for a cooperative effort by the sisters. Elisha G. Sewell, the dissenting elder, was the co-editor of the Gospel Advocate. Only the Christian Church in Chattanooga responded positively to the sisters' request. After two years, the women of both congregations raised sufficient funds to hire Andrew Myhr as a state evangelist to organize additional societies. A few months later in October, 1890, Sewell and nineteen others left the Woodland Street church to found the Tenth Street Church of Christ.⁷³

Opposed by the powerful voice of the Gospel Advocate, Myhr's work achieved at best modest success. In the fall of 1891, he invited James H. Garrison to speak before the Tennessee missionary convention held at the Woodland church. At its conclusion, Garrison noted tersely in his diary: "Tennessee is yet to rank with our best missionary States."⁷⁴

⁷³Elisha G. Sewell, Gospel Lessons and Life History (Nashville, 1908), 285-300.

⁷⁴Garrison Diary, October 15, 1891, Garrison Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

To remedy this situation, the leaders of both the CWBM and the General Christian Missionary Society (formerly the ACMS) agreed to hold their next national convention in Nashville.

Shortly after plans for the convention were announced, Lipscomb registered his extreme displeasure. He considered the chief factor motivating the missionary Disciples was a "desire to triumph over us." As far as he was concerned, the church membership of Nashville opposed the convention. At most, he insisted, only a small number "from Woodland street and a few from [the] Vine [street congregation] wish it."⁷⁵ The Gospel Advocate editor considered the coming meeting to be a personal affront.

On the eve of the conventions' assembling, Lipscomb published a strongly worded condemnation of them, which made it plain that the thrust of his wrath was aimed at the CWBM. He reminded his pro-missionary society brethren how frequently they quoted Galatians 3:28, "'there is neither male nor female,' . . . yet [they divided] the Christians into male and female societies." The editor declared that scriptures commanded woman's silence and submission to man. But the CWBM put women forth "to speak, to manage the society, to employ and send out preachers, and to boss their affairs as the men do theirs." With utter disdain, he quoted a

⁷⁵David Lipscomb, "The General Convention at Nashville," OR, XXXV (January 19, 1892), 1.

brother who justified such actions because the sisters did "it so deliciously."⁷⁶ This last phrase became an epithet which he would use repeatedly in the months to come.

When the convention ended, Lipscomb castigated them both as a disgrace to the "disciples in Tennessee." He was appalled that at a religious meeting "so little reference was made to the Bible." Instead the speeches were of the "old Fourth-of-July spread-eagle variety, praising the Anglo-Saxon prowess . . . and glorifying . . . country."⁷⁷ He ridiculed the decorum of these assemblies. "I do not think," the editor complained, "delicious speeches [by the sisters] or animal enthusiasm manifested by constant cheering and hand-clapping . . . compensate in any way for the violated law of God."⁷⁸

From October through December, Lipscomb leveled his aim at the CWBM with the indignation of a man who had witnessed the virtues of true womanhood prostituted. In his mind, the women of the CWBM not only disobeyed the word of God, but they also trespassed "against womanly modesty and position, against motherhood, against the sanctity of the marriage

⁷⁶David Lipscomb, "Card of Invitation," GA, XXXIV (October 6, 1892), 628-29.

⁷⁷David Lipscomb, "Convention Items," ibid. (October 27, 1892), 676.

⁷⁸David Lipscomb, "Convention Thoughts," ibid. (November 10, 1892), 709.

relationship." Furthermore, "in usurping the function especially committed to men," these women sinned against and drove men "from the church and from God."⁷⁹ He held in contempt those sisters who occupied the pulpit of the Vine Street church and made their "'most delicious' speeches."⁸⁰ One of these was a "mere girl" who presented "a rambling talk on missions" to Charles Loos, John W. McGarvey, and "other wise men." It "could not profit them," and it "injured her and lowered the standard of womanly modesty."⁸¹

The attitude of Lipscomb and James H. Garrison toward the sisters' speeches illustrated the wide gulf between pro- and anti-society Disciples as they looked upon woman's status. Major lectures were given by Mrs. Otis A. Burgess, Persis L. Christian, and Mrs. Alice Williams of Cameron, Missouri. After returning to St. Louis, Garrison wrote that "the addresses of sister Burgess, . . . Christian and Williams, and the tender, tearful, heart-felt talks" of many other consecrated women impressed the brotherhood. He affirmed that anyone who sought to "'silence' them with a passage of Scripture, would be guilty" of trying "to stop the rotation of the earth with a Bible text." The publisher of the Christian-

⁷⁹David Lipscomb, "Woman and Her Work," 644.

⁸⁰David Lipscomb, "Convention Items," 676.

⁸¹David Lipscomb, "Convention Thoughts," 709.

Evangelist was pleased that these women manifested "a modesty, a womanliness and self-forgetfulness" that had conquered the prejudices of conservatives.⁸²

Lipscomb was not conquered. He admitted that he was impressed with the arrangement and delivery of Alice Williams' speech. But he added with sarcasm: "it was done 'deliciously.'" Lipscomb then condemned her and all other preaching sisters for violating the commandments of Paul, the Apostle. He asked: "will some of these [brethren] who said 'amen' and clapped their hands so heartily, please" explain how "to keep silence" could be changed "to speaking in the churches."⁸³

The entire Nashville affair ended with a brief, but bitter exchange between the Christian-Evangelist and the Gospel Advocate. Garrison's paper praised "our good women of the C. W. B. M." who resisted without bitterness "the inexpressibly unjust, ungalant, and unchristian attacks of the Gospel Advocate [sic]."⁸⁴ Lipscomb responded quickly. Gallantry, he explained, was the deference shown by the stronger male sex to the weaker female sex. He suggested

⁸²[James H. Garrison], "The Nashville Convention," CE, XXXIX (October 26, 1892), 676.

⁸³[David Lipscomb], "Paul's Words and 'Woman's Opportunity,'" GA, XXXIV (October 20, 1892), 661.

⁸⁴"Our Budget," CE, XXIX (November 17, 1892), 724.

that "woman in pants, on the rostrum or managing conventions rejected the offices of gallantry." Professing to "love woman with a true love," he warned his sisters that to disobey Paul's command of silence would lead to eternal "death, despite all [of woman's] 'tender, tearful, heartfelt talks.'"⁸⁵

Little good was accomplished for the CWBM at the Nashville convention. Lipscomb, and those Disciples who accepted his lead, remained unconverted to missionary societies. They believed the CWBM represented both a repudiation of their religious plea and a desecration of the values of true womanhood.

Following the convention, Persis Christian toured Middle and East Tennessee hoping to establish new CWBM auxiliaries and to raise money for missions. Her success was meager. In Murfreesboro she received a collection of only one dollar. The Chattanooga woman's auxiliary which was "once strong and active" had fallen into a "debilitated condition." She had some modest success at the small East Tennessee community of Sherman Heights where she created a society of eight members. At Knoxville, her audience was small despite the endorsement of "Bro. Birney." Arriving in Johnson City, the local minister assured her that "there was little or no prejudice . . . against the work" of the CWBM, but no collection was taken.

⁸⁵David Lipscomb, "An Unjust Charge," GA, XXXIV (December 1, 1892), 756.

Not until she reached Bristol in upper East Tennessee did she find welcome. There she established a strong chapter containing twenty new CWBM members.⁸⁶

After 1892, Lipscomb felt increasingly alienated from the fellowship of the Disciples of Christ. In August, 1897, he published a series of three articles in the Gospel Advocate proclaiming that he no longer considered himself in communion with the Christian Church. He listed a number of theological and philosophical heresies practiced by the liberal Disciples. Among these was their tendency to go beyond the New Testament example by building "a foreign society, a home society, a woman's society, a church building society," and so on.⁸⁷ While no firm date can be readily agreed upon for the actual separation of the Churches of Christ from the Christian Church, these articles are of symbolic importance.

Just two weeks before this event, Elisha G. Sewell published in the Gospel Advocate a savage attack upon missionary society women. It provides excellent insight as to the status of women among anti-society Disciples at the point of the movement's division. He began his article by defining woman's proper role in terms of domesticity. The factor

⁸⁶Persis L. Christian, "Work in Tennessee," MT, X (January, 1892), 12.

⁸⁷David Lipscomb, "From the Paper," GA, XXXIX (August 19, 1897), 513. See Lipscomb, "From the Papers," ibid. (August 5, 1897), 481; Lipscomb, "The Vital Point," ibid. (August 19, 1897), 514-16.

which made a home lovely, he affirmed, was the cheerful activity of "a modest and devoted Christian wife and mother." Religious women were to be "home builders" and as such they would become "the queens of home." By contrast, "women who get up societies, and become presidents and secretaries . . . cast a shadow . . . upon those home-working, patient, and plodding women who are seldom known beyond [their] neighborhood." To Sewell, "these president and secretary women and pulpit women" were violating God's law, "while faithful home-keeping and home building women" were "honoring God and blessing humanity." Near the end of the article, he reminisced that his mother was not active in a missionary society or any "human organization." "She was emphatically a keeper at home, a home builder, working continually . . . for the well-being of her husband and children." In the lesson's conclusion, he praised "the Lord for such wives and mothers, and . . . for their lovely examples in the home and in the assembly of the saints and in the community!"⁸⁸ At century's end, evangelistic Disciples were still faithful to the cult of true womanhood.

On the other hand, church liberals had adjusted their perception of woman's status to allow the female sex a role

⁸⁸Elisha G. Sewell, "Woman's Real Position in the Church," *ibid.* (July 29, 1897), 469. The words "home" and "homes" appeared 38 times in this article of slightly less than one page.

beyond the domestic sphere. The example of modest, Christian women working through the CWBM convinced these churchmen that they had little to fear from an expanded role of women in the church. At the turn of the century, James H. Garrison spoke to the young women graduates of the School of Pastoral Helpers. He was pleased that women were preparing to assist their brethren in the guidance of the church and he praised the "rapid multiplication of callings" allowed women in "our modern life." Nonetheless, he believed that women were not fit for all professions. At some point a line had to be drawn between those occupations for which woman was "preeminently adapted, and others which she would do well to avoid." Since by nature the female sex possessed "finer and higher qualities" of character than the male, she should enter only those careers which do not violate the "essential qualities of womanhood."⁸⁹

Neither Lipscomb, Sewell, nor Garrison could divorce their concept of the female sex from the belief that woman-kind possessed special moral traits superior to those of men. Whether they supported or rejected the CWBM and women preaching, male Disciples defined the status of women in terms of true womanhood. In their collective thought women were to be

⁸⁹Garrison, Address to the Graduates of the School of Pastoral Helpers, Garrison Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

more moral than men, most women were to marry, and all proper women were to be mothers. Members of this religious fellowship almost never perceived of the individual woman as anything other than a sister, a wife, or a mother.

CHAPTER IV

MORALITY, MARRIAGE, AND MOTHERHOOD

In the late nineteenth century, two common middle class concerns centered around the destruction of a sense of community, and a perceived crisis in the family. Overwhelmed by the complexities of urbanization, industrialization, and modern agricultural practices, many Americans failed to comprehend the impersonal forces which seemed to corrupt their world. Given the general belief that by her nature woman was more a creature of heart and warmth than man, society looked to American mothers to preserve and to restore the fading traditional values of home and society.¹ The worship of motherhood, which intensified in the years following the Civil War, suggests the increasing appeal of the cult of true womanhood. Mothers were viewed as the caretakers of the family around whom both the physical comforts and the soul of the home revolved. In her study of the feminization of

¹Daniel W. Howe, "American Victorianism as a Culture," American Quarterly, XXVII (December, 1975), 530-31. Several authors have discussed at length this theme of social disorder in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920 (New York, 1967), xiii-xiv, 44-47; Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven, 1950), 3-54; David W. Noble, The Progressive Mind, 1890-1917 (Chicago, 1971), 1-22.

American culture, Ann Douglas notes that "mothers increasingly took over the formerly paternal task of conducting family prayers."² Sermons, memoirs, and other popular literature proclaimed the recurring theme that "good men were what their mothers made them." In the mind of the middle class, fathers played a much less substantial role in perpetuating social mores.

Four late nineteenth century developments especially alarmed those who saw marriage and the home besieged: the so-called revolution in morals, the rising number of divorces, the falling birth rate among the "better sort of people," and the changing position of women in society.³ Ministers, who like the female sex as a whole, were relegated to the passive role of preserving traditional values, began to romanticize the attributes of motherhood hoping that each of these problems could be resolved through a rededication of woman to her proper sphere.⁴ Along with others of the middle class, the Disciples of Christ shared in this fear of family deterioration and looked to motherhood for salvation.

The Disciple adoration of woman's maternal potential was generally phrased in the excessive sentimentality of Victorian

²Douglas, Feminization of American Culture, 74-76.

³Christopher Lasch, Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged (New York, 1977), 8.

⁴Douglas, Feminization of American Culture, 41-43.

prose. Writing under the somewhat peculiar pseudonym of "Harry Hotspur," one of their ministers proclaimed that Jehovah through the Virgin Mary "lifted Motherhood up to [God's] own divine level." In his scheme of redemption, Christ's sweat at Gethsemane and his blood on the Roman cross would have been impossible without "the earlier sweat and blood of Mary's maternal martyrdom." Although Eve's curse brought pain and disgrace to childbirth, "from Mary down to the mother of to-day, the glory and honor of womanhood has been restored."⁵

While the Disciples placed mothers on the level with angelic beings, fathers were given a much less honored position. Even when mentioned, their influence was largely supplemental to maternal power. Dr. J. H. Hanaford, who frequently contributed to the Christian Monitor and the Christian Companion, found man significantly inferior to woman in child rearing. The father image reminded him of "some of the lower orders of creation that deposit the egg on a rock" and leave it to the accidents of nature. By contrast, the mother image was "more like the incubating bird, protecting and warming the egg for days and weeks," and then feeding, defending, and training her young in a manner "worthy of imitation in the

⁵Harry Hotspur [pseud.], "Motherhood," CE, XXIII (September 9, 1886), 565.

higher types of life."⁶

Since the Disciples envisioned pious mothers as the source of social stability, they condemned with emotion the feminist demands for sexual equality. These dedicated women were seen by them as an anti-home force taking wives out of their proper domain at the family's center. Castigating "woman's rights and voting," an unidentified sister declared in the American Christian Review for 1871 that she had "no sympathy with the woman who would leave the duties God has given her as a wife and mother."⁷ In a speech before the young "ladies" of a Disciple college, James A. Brooks dismissed the woman's rights army as consisting "first of ancient maidens with no thrones at home upon which to sit, as queens . . . and second . . . of matrons who have ruled their husbands, not by love, but by the envenomed tongue, rod, or broom stick."⁸ As late as 1888, a Christian Church minister attacked feminists for neglecting their homes and abandoning their children. Still, he proclaimed, "thank God, the traditions of our more primitive days survive in thousands of

⁶J. H. Hanaford, "Woman as a Molder of Character: The Mother as an Educator," CC, XXV (March, 1886), 108.

⁷Mother, "Maternal Responsibility," ACR, XIV (August 29, 1871), 274.

⁸James A. Brooks, "Woman an Element in the Civilization of Time," C, XIII (July 22, 1875), 1.

homes, through the influence of mothers."⁹

Faced with what they considered an increasingly decadent society, the Disciples longed for an old fashioned time when they assumed woman held the nation together. They based their assumptions upon the female sex's maternal potential and out of it grew three corollaries: women must be moral in order to preserve the purity of future mothers; most women should be married in order to establish the proper environment to raise future generations; and women must be mothers in order to inculcate into their children those values which would better society. By means of both her biological functions and her maternal instincts, woman was to become the savior of the commonwealth. "Our wives and mothers [are] the conservators of virtue and religion," wrote an evangelist in the Gospel Advocate, and if they fail "what must become of the community?"¹⁰

Christian Church ministers and laymen were adamant in their belief that womankind should be protected from the evils of this world. They assumed that within the context of the home the female sex possessed a higher sense of morality than the male sex, but in the wider social circles beyond

⁹H. M. Morrison, "Child Training," CS, XXIII (June 9, 1888), 351.

¹⁰Preacher, "A Plea for Babies and Their Mothers," GA, XXI (October 23, 1879), 678.

the home and the church woman was more vulnerable to sin than man. Almost all members of this church subscribed to the catechism-like admonitions of James L. Thornberry in his "Hints to Girls and Young Ladies." He assured these young women that their "greatest power for good" arose from their "purity, modesty, intelligence, and loveliness." To guarantee their virtue, he urged girls to read their Bibles and other mind-strengthening literature. On the other hand, he plead with them to refrain from "love sickening novels," to avoid theaters, circuses, and dances, and to "not spend precious time in croquet or other foolish games." Furthermore, he begged young women to "not hinder [their] loveliness" by cutting their hair or by dressing in the decadent fashions of their age.¹¹ To Thornberry and his fellow churchmen, modesty was the key to a young girl's maturing process. The Christian Church subscribed to a strict moral code for women and its ministers envisioned a large number of worldly evils that threatened the virtue of would-be mothers.

Without exception Disciples writers were desirous that women not dress with pretension. M. P. Hayden, a prominent liberal minister, was shocked when a sister attended a Christian Woman's Board of Missions convention wearing a garment indecent for even a ballroom. In his opinion, the "dress,

¹¹James L. Thornberry, "Hints to Girls and Young Ladies," ibid., XXVI (August 13, 1884), 520.

about the neck and sleeves was conspicuous for its partial absence." Shortly afterwards, he attended a wedding and was stunned when the bride's gown contained not only a low neckline, but also "was marked by an entire absence of sleeves!"¹² Both the liberal and conservative members of this religious body shared such consternation. Writing in the Gospel Advocate, Charlotte Fanning admonished "Christian girls" that "neat, becoming clothes should be worn by all young persons" while "the extreme of fashion . . . suits only those who live without hope, and without God."¹³ In his book-length discussion of marriage and the home, John L. Brandt, an ecumenical Disciple, joined in that judgment. He warned potential grooms to make "it the law, as binding as that of the Medes and the Persians, that the young woman [who] pays more attention to millinery than to mental charms, will never be a helpmate of yours."¹⁴

A few Disciples saw physical reasons for needed dress reform. In 1886, Dr. J. H. Hanaford condemned the health impairing fashions of "this artificial age." He believed the whale-bone stays and metal hooks of nineteenth century under-

¹²M. P. Hayden, "A Talk About Dress," CC, XXVI (November, 1887), 353.

¹³Charlotte Fanning, "Dress," GA, XI (January 7, 1869), 23.

¹⁴John L. Brandt, Marriage and the Home (Toledo, Ohio, 1892), 71.

garments impaired digestion leading to starvation, caused poor circulation, and so lessened lung capacity that the blood remained impure. Women paid for the popular "wasp-like form" through a diminished "vital force."¹⁵ A sister agreed. She was so burdened by the "long heavy skirts in which no man could possibly navigate," that she prayed for "freedom from these instruments of our torture."¹⁶

Few members of the Christian Church campaigned outside of their fellowship for dress reform. Those who did were frustrated by the advocates of radical change. In 1874, George A. Robertson attended the "National Dress Reform Convention" hoping to do something about "the outlandish and wicked fashions that are present in vogue." Much to his disgust, he found that "instead of attempting to discard 'bustles' and long 'trails,' these silly, and . . . disreputable . . . women would have their followers . . . adopt . . . trousers!" He criticized the decorum of those who sought to end distinctions of dress and thus "have us confound the sexes."¹⁷

Closely associated with modesty of fashion was the Disciple concern that young women not follow the decadent hair styles of their time. In the Firm Foundation for 1885,

¹⁵J. H. Hanaford, "Woman as a Molder of Character, a Worse Influence," CC, XXV (February, 1886), 76.

¹⁶Candace Smith, Whom We Serve (n.p., 1896), 9-10.

¹⁷George A. Robertson, "The Dress Reform," CM, XIII (November, 1874), 481-82.

Sarai cried out against "the wearing of . . . frizzies, Bernhardt waves, and . . . the popular Langtry bangs." She assumed that the last style "originated with some lewd woman, who had some facial defect which she wished to hide." Referring to those of her sex who advocated bangs and waves, she reminded her sisters that Lillie Langtry had left her "husband's heart" to sing before "thousands of sensuous men and women," while "Sarah Bernhardt [was] an actress" rumored to have "five unlawful children, no two [by] the same father." Sarai concluded: "What patterns for God's daughters!"¹⁸

The following year the Alabama evangelist, Justus M. Barnes, concurred. He railed against those "women of America" whose hair was "cropped, clipped, frizzed, banged, plaited, knotted, gummed, [and] spliced to the letter of the law."¹⁹

Flirting and using slang were two sins Disciples also believed threatened the modesty of adolescent girls. Various writers warned against young females using such vulgar expressions as "feller," he "made a mash on me," and "dry up and bust." Sarai associated slang with another great social evil. "I have always noted," she explained, "that the girl that wears bangs talks slang."²⁰ Flirting was also considered

¹⁸Sarai, "Talks with the Sisters," FF, I (February, 1885), 14.

¹⁹Justus M. Barnes, "Woman, Her Mission, and Her Education," GA, XXVII (July 7, 1886), 418.

²⁰Sarai, "Talks with the Sisters," FF, III (January, 1887), 5; A. Phil. Istine [pseud.], "Chats with the Girls,

dangerous. John L. Brandt warned young men to avoid maidens who demonstrated "their fondness for . . . powder, paint . . . and flirtation." At all cost, he added, "beware of these giddy and excessively gay girls."²¹ Publishing in the Christian-Evangelist, a correspondent wished that "the girls of our country could only realize that true womanhood is more than an exhibit of dry goods and jewelry and to flirt with dudes!"²²

The churches of Texas possessed a problem not widely shared by Disciples in other parts of the country--women dipping snuff. While most Christian Church papers printed condemnations of tobacco use by men, only the Firm Foundation called attention to this woman-related habit. One of its editors found revolting the sight of Christian women "dipping their brushes in a common box" and then allowing the saliva to run "down the corners of their mouths on their dresses."²³ A conservative brother was convinced that many women would "rather lose their souls than to let . . . go" of their filthy bottles of snuff.²⁴ In her "Talks with the Sisters," Sarai

--Slang," ACR, XXVII (September 25, 1884), 310.

²¹Brandt, Marriage, 70.

²²D. C., "Woman's Work and Influence," CE, XXV (September 20, 1888), 590.

²³E. Hansbrough, "Christians Should not be Filthy," FF, VI (January 30, 1889), 3.

²⁴N. E. M., "Don't Be a Coward," ibid., IV (November 1, 1888), 6.

complained about those degraded mothers, who "leave the meeting-house during preaching, ostensibly to attend to their babies, but really to dip."²⁵ In the same periodical, an unidentified sister questioned how a woman could enter heaven's gates "with a dark ring of snuff around her mouth."²⁶ For these Texas Disciples, those women who engaged in the habit of snuff dipping were an affront to female propriety.

More widespread among the Disciples of Christ was the belief that novel reading and "dirty books" threatened the purity of Christian girls. In 1875, Isaac Errett attacked "ladies' novels . . . which . . . tended to corrupt and degrade the sex who chiefly write and read them."²⁷ A decade later the Christian Companion warned against "dime novels" that were "like vipers [which] crawl into houses . . . to poison and kill." This paper considered that "the publishers of such [were] making merchandise of the pure souls of our daughters."²⁸ Writing to the young women of the Disciple fellowship, Mrs. Alexander Campbell hoped "no young Christian [would] be seen with . . . novels in their hands." Instead

²⁵Sarai, "Talks with the Sisters," ibid., II (July, 1886), 7.

²⁶A Sister, "From a Sister," ibid., IV (August 15, 1888), 7.

²⁷Isaac Errett, "Modern Dress and Manners," CS, X (December 11, 1875), 395.

²⁸Editorial, CC, XXV (April, 1886), 148.

she encouraged them to read the fine books and addresses by such Disciple sisters as Marcia Goodwin, Caroline Pearre, and Zerelda Wallace.²⁹

In 1892, George F. Hall, a theologically liberal minister, discussed the subject of lewd novels in his book with the titillating title: Plain Points of Personal Purity or Startling Sins of the Sterner Sex. Although he intended his work as a guide to young men, he occasionally offered advice to women as well. He was especially concerned about the corrupting influence of obscene literature upon females. Hall found appalling the number of references to women reclining on their bosoms, "voluptuous forms," "languishing eyes," and other suggestive expressions. When he reflected on the "tons of such stuff [read by] idle young ladies," he could only wonder "that more of them do not fall an easy prey before the subtle schemes of the libertine." Quoting from Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, a popular writer on medical matters, this Disciple affirmed that the "fashionable malady . . . neurasthenia, [owed] its origin . . . to the nerve-exhausting influence of novel reading." He begged men and women alike to avoid these exciting "stories of love, crime, and passion."³⁰

²⁹Mrs. Alexander Campbell, "Correspondence," C, XVIII (September 23, 1880), 3; Mrs. Alexander Campbell, "Correspondence," CS, XX (January 3, 1885), 3.

³⁰George F. Hall, Plain Points on Personal Purity or Startling Sins of the Sterner Sex (Chicago, 1892), 98-100, 105.

Disciples found in the modern dance an even greater threat to female modesty. In his advice on selecting a good wife, John L. Brandt suggested that she "should love her home more than she loves . . . the ball-room."³¹ A young unmarried sister condemned "mothers and elder sisters" who by means of their waltzes and other dances demonstrated they were "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."³² J. G. Chinn was more to the point. He knew hundreds of young Christians "whose apostasy could be traced to dancing."³³

In the mind of the Disciples, dancing threatened the health as well as the morals of young women. Dr. J. H. Hanaford warned that the "frail and delicate" constitution of a "young lady" was ill prepared for the ballroom environment. Girls who spent hours in a "closed, over-heated room" would leave exhausted and "half-clad" to be subjected to the "biting air of a winter's night." This often resulted in pulmonary consumption." In his medical opinion, "death follows such exposure as naturally as any effect follows its cause."³⁴ A minister, writing under the pseudym "Deacon

³¹Brandt, Marriage, 88.

³²Emma Agee, "What Can We Girls Do for the Church," C, XVI (February 14, 1878), 2.

³³J. G. Chinn, "Dancing," ACR, XIII (February 22, 1870), 61.

³⁴J. H. Hanaford, "The Violation of Physical Law," CM, IX (October, 1870), 423.

Ayres," repented of his earlier support of dancing after his "little Sada" attended a ball. There she danced, became "overheated," and contracted a cold which led to pneumonia. He sadly agreed with those physicians who reported that "thousands die every year from colds taken at dances."³⁵

Nonetheless, the chief fear of dancing within the Christian Church centered around its alleged immorality. George F. Hall believed that those "who respect female virtue and manly purity [will] not dance." He saw in it "the most patent cause of adultery, fornication, and sexual looseness in general."³⁶ David Lipscomb possessed similar views. When a woman expressed a desire for this activity, he understood "her to mean that she [was] fond of being handled in a lascivious and lust exciting way." The Gospel Advocate editor quoted the New York City chief of police as claiming that three-fourths of the "bawdy house" inhabitants were corrupted on the dance floor.³⁷ The message was clear: a dancing sister lowered herself to the level of a prostitute.

Not suprisingly, the Disciples condemned those women who chose the life of a prostitute as repudiating all precepts of feminine morality. Although church leaders believed that

³⁵Deacon Ayers, "Dancing," ACR, XIII (February 22, 1870), 57.

³⁶Hall, Personal Purity, 157-58.

³⁷David Lipscomb, "Dancing," GA, XVIII (May 18, 1876), 472-73; David Lipscomb, "The Dance," ibid. (August 24, 1876), 813.

"fallen women" could receive salvation after repentance, their harsh rhetoric left little doubt about their attitude toward those women who sold their favors. A contributor to the American Christian Review admonished young girls that such a career of impurity would lead even Satan to heap upon them "the scorn of the ungodly world."³⁸ In 1892, the Christian-Evangelist commented upon the suicide of a young prostitute, editorializing: "She had committed the sin that hath no forgiveness in this world, and she died."³⁹ Little wonder that James H. Garrison could not imagine "why refined Christian women, knowing all these things, would expose their arms, shoulders and bust . . . when they knew that these were the very devices used by the demimode to awaken lust in man, and allure him to an impure life."⁴⁰

Despite the moralizing efforts of American Protestantism, prostitution was well entrenched in urban areas throughout the nineteenth century. Shortly after the Civil War, police departments in the larger cities, allied with the local health officials, began advocating the legal regulation of harlotry. They were adamantly opposed by moral purists who preferred the abolition of the institution. In the course of this

³⁸C. E. B., "'Emnity Between Thee and the Woman,'" ACR, XXVII (October 16, 1884), 330.

³⁹Editorial, CE, XXIX (November 24, 1892), 738.

⁴⁰James H. Garrison, "Social Purity," ibid., XXVII (December 18, 1890), 803.

struggle the problems of the individual prostitute was often ignored. At century's end, however, liberal Protestant ministers began initiating positive programs designed to reform "fallen women."⁴¹ Among the Disciples, various writers supported all of these positions.

Only a few Disciples supported the legal regulation of prostitution. In 1871, Isaac Errett published in his journal an editorial concerning the efforts to legalize and to regulate prostitution in Cincinnati. Although he affirmed that the church should oppose the institution itself, he accepted as inevitable that "such legalization . . . [would] be granted." The editor recognized that law as "an expression of the average sentiment of the community." The church in Errett's opinion had failed in its obligation toward these unfortunate females. Christian women avoided their abandoned sisters, and ministers accepted into fellowship those males who purchased the favors of prostitutes. "Why be horrified," he asked, "if the law affords some protection to unfortunates whom the church refuses to listen to?"⁴² Evidently Errett was persuaded to reassess his views. Three years later, he reversed his position and opposed regulation because it gave legal sanction to "a foul and hideous crime" placing it "on a par, in the eyes of the law, with virtue and honorable

⁴¹Pivar, Purity Crusade, 30-73 passim.

⁴²Isaac Errett, "The Social Evil," CS, VI (February 18, 1871), 52.

industry in honest callings."⁴³

Most members of the Christian Church sided with the moral purists who desired the abolition of prostitution. In 1893, James H. Garrison, who published the Christian-Evangelist in St. Louis, joined forces with the Women's Christian Temperance Union to oppose the "Social Evil Bill" before the Missouri legislature. The superintendent of the WCTU's "Purity Department" urged defeat of this legislation "for the sake of the mothers whose daughters will be taken to fill up" brothels, and "for the sake of the unprotected girlhood of Missouri who can be legally taken into such places at the age of fourteen."⁴⁴ Two years later Garrison endorsed an editorial from the Outlook condemning the proposed regulation of prostitution in New York City, and then added his own opposition to legalization and regulation of saloons, pool halls, and horse racing.⁴⁵ In his mind, the regulation of vice was tantamount to giving special approval to sin.

By century's end, interest in reforming the individual prostitute was expressed by both conservative and liberal Disciples, but the former failed to develop affirmative pro-

⁴³Isaac Errett, "Legalized Prostitution," ibid., IX (February 7, 1874), 44.

⁴⁴D. Hawthorne McNary, "Protest Against the Social Evil Bill," CE, XXX (March 9, 1893), 149.

⁴⁵James H. Garrison, "The 'Social Evil,'" ibid., XXXII (March 21, 1895), 179.

posals for action. When David Lipscomb's paper reviewed a Nashville scandal it demonstrated the conservative's lack of direction. In July, 1890, "Dr. Harris, a prominent preacher and editor of the Cumberland Presbyterian," was arrested after paying one hundred dollars to several "bad and abandoned women." The minister attempted to explain his presence in a brothel by claiming the money was a ransom for his "old hat" which the prostitutes had stolen. The Gospel Advocate accepted as valid his account, but took the opportunity to moralize at length. "Evidently," the paper suggested, "it was not the intrinsic value of the hat that caused the brother to part so readily with a cool hundred dollars of his hard earned cash." Rather his action was typical of the "immaculate nabob society . . . in Nashville" that retreated to the "more respectable and less sinful parts of the city." The writer sermonized: "it is high time for Christian workers . . . to get down to earnest, prayerful efforts to save souls in the very lowest, most sinful classes of society." The article's conclusion, however, was disappointing. Its author admitted that he had "no plans to suggest, no policy to dictate." He could only urge that something be done for those "without hope within a stone's throw of our churches."⁴⁶

Perhaps because they were influenced by the social gospel movement, some liberal ministers suggested an economic

⁴⁶"Those Bad and Abandoned Women," GA, XXXII (July 23, 1890), 465-66.

cause for prostitution and urged the church to take positive measures to help young girls avoid the temptation to sell their favors. In 1889, a writer for the Christian-Evangelist indicated that "Many fallen women have chosen their lives of shame because of poverty."⁴⁷ Writing with the same theme, Samuel Magee observed that most prostitutes possessed poor educations. In his opinion, this lack of formal knowledge "forced . . . young women to accept positions where they could not earn their daily bread and consequently they . . . take to the streets." To him, the solution was for churches to provide wholesome dormitories for poor working girls.⁴⁸ Only one Christian Church minister instigated a program to meet this problem. In 1895, Peter Ainslie, a Disciple advocate of the social gospel, began raising funds for a working girl's home in Baltimore. He desired to provide temporary lodging for young women who were seeking employment in his community or who were either unemployed or ill. The institution opened its doors in October, 1899.⁴⁹

Whether Disciples were concerned about fashion, novel reading, dancing, or seduction, they all had in common the

⁴⁷J. W. Monser, "Public Opinion," CE, XXIV (June 15, 1889), 381.

⁴⁸Samuel Magee, "Are the Young Women Neglected?" CO, IX (November 3, December 8, 15, 1892), 692, 771, 778.

⁴⁹Newspaper clippings, Peter Ainslie Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society; Peter Ainslie, The First Annual Report of the Christian Home for Working Girls (Baltimore, 1900), n.p.

desire that young girls remain "pure and unspotted from the world." Women were to bring into the marriage relationship an uncorrupted mind, body, and spirit. Theological liberals and conservatives were in virtual agreement as to the ideal bride. Almost all concurred with the sentimental description given by John F. Rowe, a prominent editor and evangelist, who proclaimed in the Christian Monitor that a "rosy cheeked girl, dressed in clean pink, watching over the cradle, or ironing clothes . . . or in any way assisting mother . . . is the kind of girl I admire . . . and the kind of young lady every young man of sense will select for his life companion."⁵⁰

Like other middle class Americans, the Disciples looked upon the marriage relationship as vital to modern civilization. Lipscomb called it the first "institution ordained by God for the good of man." He considered it the "only relict of the state of primeval purity" to survive man's rebellion against Jehovah.⁵¹ As a God-ordained organization, the well regulated home provided for the proper order of society. Commenting on this theme, the Nashville editor observed that in God's universe "man became the head, woman the heart, of the family and of the community."⁵²

⁵⁰John F. Rowe, "House Work," CM, VIII (August, 1869), 347.

⁵¹David Lipscomb, "The Christian Family," GA, XI (December 16, 1869), 1134.

⁵²David Lipscomb, "Old Men," ibid., XXXIV (December 8, 1892), 772.

In defining the relationship between marriage partners, Christian Church spokesmen followed the commandment found in Ephesians 5: 22-23. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." Basing his lesson upon this scripture, G. W. Rice preached a lengthy wedding sermon in June, 1886. "Two heads in one family," he noted, "would be as great a monstrosity as two heads on one body." Since woman was the weaker of the sexes, he affirmed that she was "to occupy a secondary position and subordinate herself to the will and the direction of the man."⁵³

Both ecumenical and evangelistic Disciples accepted this concept of woman's marital submission and frequently advocated it with the vocabulary of true womanhood. Writing in the liberal Christian-Evangelist one correspondent suggested that woman was "placed under the law of man, that in her loving subjection she may become rooted in his heart . . . and yet rise above him morally and spiritually."⁵⁴ In his lengthy discussion of courtship and marriage, John L. Brandt noted that God created woman as both a companion and a helpmate for man. "The idea of companionship," he indicated, was

⁵³G. W. Rice, "Address on Marriage," ACR, XXIX (June 10, 1886), 189.

⁵⁴Harry Hotspur [pseud.], "To Young Women," CE, XXIV (August 18, 1887), 517.

"that of equality; the idea of help [included] subordination."⁵⁵

Additional arguments for woman's submission in marriage were founded in the Genesis drama of creation. Publishing in the Gospel Advocate, Olsen Norrisch declared emphatically: "When God gave Eve to Adam--observe, Adam was not given to her--he laid on him a tremendous responsibility, which every husband ought always to feel."⁵⁶ A frequent female contributor to the same paper saw in Eve's transgression an important lesson. Because Eve had proven the unsafe partner, this conservative sister claimed mankind's mother "was relieved of all business responsibilities, and had to depend entirely on her husband."⁵⁷ A theologically liberal evangelist also held these beliefs. R. H. Jones wrote in the Christian that the Garden of Eden proved "woman in all her primeval purity . . . could not be contented without a confiding heart and a strong arm upon which to lean."⁵⁸

Most Disciples of the late nineteenth century spoke of marriage in terms of order, devotion, duty, and authority,

⁵⁵Brandt, Marriage, 119-20.

⁵⁶Olsen Norrisch, "Woman's Place in Creation, Relations in Life and 'Work' in the Church," GA, XXXV (February 9, 1893), 83.

⁵⁷Amanda Bostick, "Eve," ibid., XXXI (September 4, 1889), 572.

⁵⁸R. H. Jones, "Marriage," C, XIII (July 8, 1875), 2.

but rarely mentioned love. When G. W. Rice presided over the wedding of a young Ohio couple, he emphasized the proper arrangement of family government. He expounded at length on the concept that God made man the family head because the position required "hardness, firmness, decision and greater intelligence." By contrast, man's helpmate was "weaker in some things, but transcendently more elegant, beautiful and exquisite." At no point in his long sermon did the words "love" or "cherish" appear.⁵⁹

The theory of female submission within marriage left open the possibility of treating a wife as a servant rather than a companion. Several Disciple women remonstrated against this. Probably the most vocal was Mrs. T. P. Holman, the Fayetteville, Tennessee, housewife. Using the Gospel Advocate as her platform, she noted that as a rule men knew two things in the Bible well: "that man is the head of woman, and that wives should be in subjection to their husbands." She stated pointedly: "this is only conditionally true." Husbands were obliged to love their wives. Although few men intended to be unjust to their partners, this mother of seven believed the "injustice done to [woman] . . . hurts a woman almost as bad as if it were intended." Mrs. Holman had faith that in marriage men and women performed separate tasks. Wives cared for the home, and husbands engaged in "the department

⁵⁹Rice, "Address on Marriage," 189.

of money-making." Nonetheless, she rebelled against the "idea . . . that the happiness of the home depends altogether on the wife." In her mind, that advice was "so often repeated to become a little monotonous." Her article concluded that if men would treat their mates as equals and render to them kindness and affection, "there will be no necessity . . . to preach to . . . wives about man being the head of woman."⁶⁰

Corresponding statements appeared infrequently among other Disciple papers. A writer for the Christian Monitor claimed that God did not grant Adam dominance over Eve, but rather that modern masculine thought taught woman "to fear rather than reverence her husband and head."⁶¹ In the American Christian Review, "Sister Maud" proclaimed that the "Bible does not teach me [woman] must be so obedient to man that she must become his slave."⁶² And the editors of the Evangelist assured their readers that the "Scriptural story

⁶⁰Mrs. T. P. Holman, "'As Christ Loved the Church,'" GA, XXXI (May 29, 1889), 338-39. Austin McGary reprinted this article in the Firm Foundation. Using the editorial "we," he made the following comments of introduction: "Our wife was kind enough to read it to us [from the Gospel Advocate] and she read it with such warmth and expression that we were forced to admit that it was a good article and well read. She is a good reader anyway, but she seemed to surpass all of her other readings, in reading aloud sister Holman's article." Austin McGary, "Editorial Notes," FF, V (July 18, 1889), 4.

⁶¹Memor, "A Woman's View of the Situation," CM, X (January, 1871), 20.

⁶²Sister Maud, "Why Paul Did Not Marry," ACR, XXIX (January 7, 1886), 10.

[shows] us . . . woman was not made to be the slave of man, but his equal, companion, and a part of his life."⁶³ In all probability few Disciple husbands oppressed their spouses, but both sexes of this communion accepted the dominance of man in the matrimonial union.

Christian Church literature offers few insights into the day to day relationships of married couples. The exceptions were the domestic trials of evangelistic preachers' wives. Conservative ministers often left their spouses for weeks and even months at a time. Their wives remained at home with the responsibilities of raising children, caring for the household and often the farm, and facing alone the inevitable domestic crises of every family. It was a considerable burden.

The ideal preacher's wife was described by David Lipscomb in his biography of Jesse L. Sewell. He praised at length the devotion and steadfastness of Sewell's wife Elizabeth. The editor described her as a "tall, well developed woman of great bodily strength and endurance, [who possessed] a will and determination that hesitates at no difficulties." While her husband spent his late summers and entire autumns "holding protracted meetings," she gave birth to eight children, performed her extensive domestic duties, and ran the family farm. She was often out of touch with her husband. On one occasion she failed to hear from her spouse from December to

⁶³"The Bible and Marriage," E, XVI (June 8, 1882), 354.

early March. Despite her anxiety, she planted the crops, repaired fences, and "threshed with her own hand thirty bushels of oats" until her mate returned. Lipscomb found much to be admired in this woman who "never murmured or complained at her lot," and never objected to Brother Sewell's efforts "in converting men and women to Christ."⁶⁴

Preachers' wives painted a somewhat different image. In 1889, a physically ill sister tired of her "husband being away from home." She complained with anger of remaining in bed "day after day . . . [unable] to sit up, alone with my little children."⁶⁵ That same year, Katie Sommer opened the pages of the Octographic Review to the "wives of preachers who . . . spend many hours of loneliness and depression because of the absence of . . . dear ones."⁶⁶ Two responded immediately. The first listed herself as "one of that unfortunate number." Her husband had just left on the morning train for three weeks of evangelizing. "I used to weep and beg him not to go," she cried out, but because of his good work, "I became reconciled to my lot."⁶⁷ A second preacher's wife sympathized with those who stayed at home and cared "for

⁶⁴David Lipscomb, Life and Sermons of Jesse L. Sewell (Nashville, Tennessee, 1891), 51, 90-92.

⁶⁵A. D., "Preachers' Wives," FF, V (August 8, 1889), 7.

⁶⁶Katie W. Sommer, "To Our Preachers' Wives," OR, XXXII (October 3, 1889), 7.

⁶⁷Matilda Gorman, "From a Preacher's Wife," ibid., (November 7, 1889), 7.

their children . . . while the . . . father is gone to proclaim the truths of the gospel." Her husband had recently returned from a ten days work, stayed home two, and then left again to engage in a protracted meeting.⁶⁸

Five weeks after she opened the discussion of preachers' wives, Katie Sommer revealed her own severe distress. Her husband, Daniel, a prominent conservative evangelist, would spend weeks carrying on evangelistic meetings and leave the publishing responsibilities of his paper to her. "Dear Sisters," she wrote, your mates may not be "your . . . ideal of a husband [but] think of them leaving you for months at a time." From the middle of August to November, she had not seen her spouse over three and a half days. "I do not have the time to sit and lament over these separations," she acknowledged, "for my whole time and energy are being devoted to the interest of the [Octographic Review] and our children." Since Katie Sommer considered herself one of the "weaker sex," she buckled under the strain and called Daniel home from his evangelistic effort. In a moment of self-abasement, this preacher's wife prayed that "the Lord may not hold me accountable for the good that may have been accomplished at that place."⁶⁹ Through bitter experience, conservative Disciples

⁶⁸Allie Ammons, "From a Preacher's Wife," ibid. (November 14, 1889), 7.

⁶⁹Katie W. Sommer, "To the Sisterhood," ibid.

often learned that the paternal as well as the maternal force was needed for family stability.

For the most part, Christian Church authors avoided discussing the sexual aspect of family unions. In his tract on marriage and the home, John L. Brandt examined at length courtship, wedding arrangements, and home government, but he totally ignored the subject of personal intimacy. Nonetheless, evidence gleaned from their literature suggests that the Disciples engaged in sexual intercourse for both its reproductive functions and its emotional benefits to the husband and wife.

Disciple writers were more open in their discussion of procreation than in examining the subject of physical intimacy. In a typical case, an unidentified preacher rejoiced at the birth of his ninth child. In his comments, he referred to the marriage status of an apostle: if "we were celibates, we might, like Paul, make tents." However, he assumed that a family's "annual and biennial increase" indicated God's purpose for a husband and wife.⁷⁰ David Lipscomb also hinted at the desirability of an active sexual union. He believed in "early marriages and a house full of healthy, obedient, industrious, self-reliant children." The editor added: "Good, large families of . . . children, brought up in the nurture

⁷⁰S. E. F., "Paying Preachers, Preachers' Wives, Etc.," ACR, XII (February 16, 1869), 49.

and admonition of the Lord, are the nurseries not only of the Church, but of heaven itself."⁷¹ Sadly, he and his wife were barren.

Although the Disciples considered reproduction one of the primary functions God intended for woman, on those rare occasions when they discussed the subject of sexual intimacy, they indicated that it served to gratify the emotional needs of both the man and the woman.⁷² At the same time, they accepted the popular belief that excessive intercourse diminished the "vital capacities" and resulted in physical and mental harm.⁷³ They, therefore, urged moderation.

Two of their writers, who spoke with some candor on the subject of sex, acknowledged the human passion and made no distinction between male and female desires. Lipscomb taught that sexual intercourse within marriage was necessary to the emotional stability of the couple. Basing his belief on I Corinthians 7: 5, "defraud ye not one the other . . . that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency," he concluded that

⁷¹David Lipscomb, "Marriages and Deaths," GA, XI (November 18, 1869), 1069.

⁷²Although the popular stereotype suggests that Victorian women feared sexual passion, Carl Degler has indicated that they were cognizant of their sexuality and enjoyed a healthy attitude toward the subject. Carl Degler, "What Ought to Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," American Historical Review, LXXIX (December, 1974), 1467-90.

⁷³Ben Baker-Benfield, "The Spermatic Economy: A Nineteenth-Century View of Sexuality," Feminist Studies, I (1972), reprinted in Michael Gordon, ed., The American Family in Socio-Historical Perspective (New York, 1973), 336-41.

marital intimacy prevented adultery. He thus felt that one of the primary functions of marriage was the "gratification of sexual passions."⁷⁴ The theologically liberal George F. Hall discussed more candidly the subject of sexual relationships. At best, however, his work contained advice of dubious physiological and social value. This minister did "not . . . accept the theory . . . that the sexual act should [only] be engaged in . . . when [an] offspring is desired." Believing that intercourse served to bring the husband and wife into a harmonious relationship, he suggested it was "intended by our Maker for other high and holy purposes along with begetting children." Nonetheless, he accepted the popular belief that frequent ejaculation of sperm was physically and mentally harmful. He advocated temperance, because "a large percentage of the cases of vertigo, backache, kidney, stomach and liver disorders, nervousness and consumption are brought on by excessive sexual intercourse." To avoid temptation, he admonished married couples to sleep in separate beds in separate rooms. To support his views, he relied upon "a prominent New York physician," who condemned excessive physical contact. The physician observed that when two people sleep together five to eight hours nightly it tended to promote "permanent uncongeniality by making the pair grow alike physically." Nonetheless, Hall's authority noted the virtual impossibility

⁷⁴David Lipscomb, "Queries," GA, XXIII (May 12, 1881), 296.

of marital reform. The doctor recognized that the "retiring chit-chat, and the morning helps . . . in buttoning or hooking, are little affairs, but great in the aggregate, and not easily set aside."⁷⁵ Neither Hall, nor Lipscomb adequately revealed the nature of Disciple marriages. The personal lives of their late nineteenth century religious fellowship remained cloaked in privacy.

In common with other middle class Americans, the Disciples condemned with equal fervor birth control and abortion. Evidence gathered from women's diaries, the legal prosecution of professional abortionists, and newspaper advertisements for pills designed to abort fetuses suggests that nineteenth century women strongly desired to limit the size of their families. Throughout the century the birth rate per white woman declined with each decade from 7.04 in 1800 to 5.42 in 1850 to 3.56 in 1900. By mid-century, American medical authorities feared that Anglo-Saxon women were not reproducing fast enough to prevent the race from being overtaken by what they considered the less desirable racial stocks from eastern and southern Europe. As a result, these physicians began a concerted campaign to promote births as a moral obligation of American womanhood and crusaded to end the practice of inducing abortions. In the 1870's Congress aided this campaign by passing the Comstock Law which made it illegal

⁷⁵Hall, Personal Purity, 298-306.

to disseminate birth control literature. Employed by New York City's Young Men's Christian Association, Anthony Comstock was but one of several moral zealots who prosecuted advocates of contraception.⁷⁶ Disciple authors sided with moral purists in attacking attempts to limit births.

Amanda Bostick, a regular contributor to the Gospel Advocate proclaimed that "it is the one great desire of every good woman to become a mother." But she saw in modern "fashionable society" a destruction of "this heaven born sentiment." In her mind, the failure to bear children was the product of "an almost hopeless wicked state of a woman's soul."⁷⁷ Other Disciples agreed with her. From their perspective, those insensitive parents who avoided or terminated pregnancy committed wholesale infanticide. In 1868, Isaac Errett railed against the "rapidly growing crime of child murder." "God only knows," he declared, "how many children, born and unborn, are yearly offered up to the Moloch of fashion."⁷⁸ Twenty-

⁷⁶Ansley J. Coale and Melvin Zelnik, New Estimates of Fertility and Population in the United States (Princeton, 1963), 36; Linda Gordon, Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America (New York, 1974), 49-71; John Paull Harper, "Be Fruitful and Multiply: Origins of Legal Restrictions on Planned Parenthood in the Nineteenth-Century," in Carol R. Berkin and Mary B. Norton, eds., Women of America: A History (Boston, 1979), 246-65.

⁷⁷Amanda Bostick, "Eve," GA, XXXI (March 20, 1889), 181.

⁷⁸Isaac Errett, "Murdering Children," CS, III (September 5, 1868), 284.

five years later, a Missouri evangelist and father of nine was convinced that Christian Church ministers engaged in abortion. "Look . . . at the families of the younger class of preachers," he suggested, "and make note of the number of those with only one child or none." He reasoned that the ministry of our American people are . . . guilty of the horrible crime of murdering their own offsprings," and he could not envision why "American women [had] come to so abhor maternity as to lay upon their own souls the blood of their . . . children."⁷⁰ David Lipscomb shared in this assessment. He moralized: "It is a wicked, murderous spirit that would destroy life, before or after birth, and that is very near akin to it that would prevent conception." In his opinion, "a household of well-behaved boys and girls [was] the healthy mark of a pure and virtuous and good woman."⁸⁰ John W. McGarvey was equally blunt. Christian women, he expounded, should be aware of this practice's "deep criminality." Every act of abortion sacrificed a life "which ought to be as precious to [a mother] as [her] own."⁸¹

⁷⁹S. McDaniel, "Chimney-Corner Theology," *ibid.*, XXIX (April 29, 1893), 330.

⁸⁰David Lipscomb, "Bearing Children," *GA*, XII (June 2, 1870), 517.

⁸¹John W. McGarvey, "Infanticide," *AT*, IV (August 22, 1872), 4. For related articles, see "Miscellaneous Items," *ACR*, XII (June 8, 1869), 184; F. M. Green, "Abortion," *ibid.*, XIII (January 18, 1870), 17; David Lipscomb, "Woman's Station and Work," *GA*, XXX (October 10, 1888), 7.

Among Christian Church spokesmen, only George F. Hall condemned specific methods of birth control. Holding in low esteem those "unprincipled manufacturers" who sold mechanical devices "for the prevention of conception," he praised Anthony Comstock, the moral crusader, who had recently "seized nearly one hundred thousand such articles, of rubber, etc." Hall also opposed natural techniques of contraception. Singling out "Onanism," (coitus interruptus) or the act of male climax outside of the woman's body, he called it "a nasty, vulgar practice [which] no decent man should ever think of engaging in."⁸²

Birth control and abortion were considered internal threats to marital morality. At the same time, the Disciples saw the family beseiged by two outside dangers: polygamy and divorce. At all cost, they determined to preserve monogamy.

As pictured by Christian Church writers, the Mormon institution of polygamy existed simply for a male's carnal gratification and subjected wives to sexual abuse. In 1882, Mrs. S. E. Smart expressed thanks in the Christian Monitor that "our best and wisest citizens" were attacking polygamy. She hoped "this frightful evil soon would be abolished in the United States."⁸³ Two years later an unidentified male spoke

⁸²Hall, Personal Purity, 117-18, 311-12.

⁸³Mrs. S. E. Smart, "Editorial," CM, XXI (February, 1881), 94.

with equal fervor. He argued that Satan had planted polygamy "in the heart of this continent, under the folds of the Star-Spangled Banner, and in the shadow of the Cross;" and averred that American womanhood would destroy the evil "if they have to . . . march in procession to Utah and do it with their own fair hands!"⁸⁴

Ministers of this persuasion made a broad and general association of polygamy with the hated concept of free love. When G. W. Rice solemnized the union of John T. Herbert to Luella Young in 1886, he dwelled at length on this subject. Polygamy and free lovism, he assured the couple, were "twin sisters born of adulterous parentage, that can not be legalized nor tolerated . . . without risk to the purity of society and stability of government itself."⁸⁵ Clark Braden, a strong advocate of woman's ordination, made a similar association. When Mormons pointed to King Solomon's multiple wives, this Disciple replied that the Jewish king's life had two phases. In the first, "he obeyed God's law, had . . . one wife, and was a child of God." Later Solomon "became an apostate, had a thousand prostitutes [and] became an infidel FREE LOVER." Braden lectured that this prominent Old Testament personality "wore himself out in his licentiousness . . . and died at

⁸⁴C. E. B., "'Emnity Between Thee and the Woman,'" 330.

⁸⁵G. W. Rice, "Address on Marriage," ACR, XXIX (July 8, 1886), 221.

Fifty-eight, a God-forsaken debauchee, as polygamists ever have and will."⁸⁶

Suprisingly, David Lipscomb looked at the furor over polygamy with detached humor. He found it ironic that New Englanders, who had enacted the nation's most liberal divorce laws, were the greatest opponents of Mormon marriages. In his view, New England husbands took their wives in "tandem, one at a time," while in Utah, husbands took their spouses "abreast, all at once." The Nashville editor preferred "the Mormon style." No advocate of the "dark crimes of Mormonism," he indicated that it was unwise to "complain so greatly of . . . polygamy" until "loose marriage and easy divorce" quit "threatening to pollute the whole fabric of society."⁸⁷

Rare prior to the Civil War, divorce was recognized by 1900 as an important social phenomenon. After examining the legal dissolution of marriage in its nineteenth century context, William L. O'Neill has made the observation that the

⁸⁶Clark Braden, "Do the Scriptures Inculcate or Sanction Polygamy" CQR, VIII (October, 1889), 498. For related articles on the subject, see "A Family Picture," AT, I (February 24, 1870), 363; J. A. M., "Does the Bible Forbid Polygamy?" ibid., V (June 12, 1873), 6; W., "The Mormon Problem," CP, X (May 19, 1870), n.p.; D. R. Duncan, "A Sermon . . . Delivered in Christian Chapel, Lincoln, Nebraska, on Sunday Evening, July 11, 1874," E, IX (July 30, 1874), 242; "The Bible and Polygamy," ibid., XVII (August 17, 1882), 514; G. W. Yancy, "Marriage and Polygamy," OPG, III (April, 1881), 227.

⁸⁷David Lipscomb, "Suggestions on Mormonism," GA, XXV (May 16, 1883), 305; David Lipscomb, "Divorce and Adultery," ibid., XXVI (April 30, 1884), 274.

rising divorce rate indicated the social strength of the nuclear family (father, mother, children). Prior to the eighteenth century, society was dominated by the extended family which included not only father, mother, and children, but also other relatives, servants, and friends. Since houses were small, and everyone lived and slept in the same rooms, privacy was minimal and sexual contact among several individuals in the family was frequent. Within the extended family, children were valued for the economic benefits they contributed to the household. The modern nuclear family developed among the middle class in the late seventeenth century when society began insisting that the family existed to train children and when house construction began to emphasize the need for personal privacy. O'Neill observed that when families were large and sexual ties loose, they aroused few expectations, and as a result there was little need for divorce. But the nineteenth century nuclear family required fidelity between husband and wife, stability, intimacy, and responsibility toward children. Although demanding, most nineteenth century marriages worked. Nonetheless, divorce became a safety valve that made the system viable by enabling discontented individuals to escape from those unions which proved unworkable. When the modern family came to dominate society in the nineteenth century, divorce became more common.⁸⁸

⁸⁸William L. O'Neill, Divorce in the Progressive Era (New Haven, 1967), 1, 4-7; William L. O'Neill, "Divorce as a Moral

Along with most middle class Americans, the Disciples failed to see divorce as anything but an alarming threat to social stability. Although a prominent churchman argued in the early 1870's that there was "more ambiguity connected with divorce cases than any other of Church discipline," in reality the Disciples spoke almost with one voice.⁸⁹ Only the most avant-garde Disciples in the last years of the century differed from the church's majority.⁹⁰ Theologically, divorce was wrong except for the cause of adultery. Socially, the dissolving of the marital bond was detrimental to the fabric of public morals. In 1874, a Nebraska minister expounded from the Sunday rostrum: "I believe that our laws . . . in this Christian land . . . tell with painful certainty, that the pulpit has failed to make itself heard on the subject."⁹¹

Christian Church preachers consistently argued that only sexual intercourse outside of the marriage constituted

Issue: A Hundred Years of Controversy," in Carol V. R. George, ed., "Remember the Ladies," New Perspectives on Women in American History (Syracuse, 1975), 131.

⁸⁹John Mavity, "Divorce," CR, 5th. sr., I (January, 1875), 27.

⁹⁰In 1894, the theologically liberal Christian Oracle added the vague cause of "mitigating . . . circumstances" to adultery as grounds for divorce. The paper's editors believed that "the eternal principles of justice and mercy must not be overlooked" under such conditions. "Talks with Querists," CO, XI (May 31, 1894), 338.

⁹¹Duncan, "A Sermon . . . Delivered in Christian Chapel," 242.

grounds for divorce. The little controversy that existed centered around accepting into fellowship divorced individuals. Must a congregation expel members whose marriages end for causes other than adultery? Church editors unanimously agreed in the affirmative.⁹² Can the "innocent party" in a divorce for adultery remarry? Most Disciple leaders replied yes.⁹³ If a non-Disciple divorces for other than adultery, remarries, and is then converted, can he enter the fellowship of the congregation? Except for two church spokesmen, the

⁹²John F. Rowe, "Divorce and Adultery," ACR, XXVII (April 17, 1884), 124; J. H. Ballinger, "Law of Divorce," ibid. (October 16, 1884), 333; John W. McGarvey, "Queries," AT, V (March 26, 1874), 5; Daleph, "Divorce," ibid., VII (September 16, 1875), 414; "Talks with Querists," CO, VII (September 18, 1890), 594; W. G. Springer, "Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage," ibid. (December 11, 1890), 788; B. K. Smith, "Divorce," CP, X (September 29, 1870), n.p.; Isaac Errett, "Querists' Drawer," CS, II (October 19, 1867), 330; W. D. Ingram, "Marriage," FF, VI (August 28, 1890), 5; David Lipscomb, "Marriage and Adultery," GA, XV (May 8, 1873), 445-46; David Lipscomb, "Queries," ibid., XXVII (November 4, 1885), 710; "Queries," ibid., XXIX (June 22, 1887), 396; Elisha G. Sewell, "Marriage and Divorce," ibid., XXXV (August 31, 1893), 547; "Question Drawer," OPG, III (January, 1881), 52-53.

⁹³W. F. Madden, "Marriage--Divorce," ACR, XIII (November 15, 1870), 362; S. "Divorce--Hard Cases," ibid., XVI (July 22, 1873), 226; F. M. Collins, "Divorce," ibid., XXIII (January 6, 1880), 1; A. Pickerill, "The Law of Divorce," ibid. (February 10, 1880), 41; J. Perry Elliott, "The Law of Divorce," ibid. (February 17, 1880), 49; "Queries and Answers," CO, VI (January 10, 1889), 25; J. M. Mathes, "Querist's Department," CR, n.s., II (July, 1883), 203; Elisha G. Sewell, "Queries," GA, XXII (September 23, 1880), 616; "Queries," ibid., XXIX (August 10, 1887), 499; David Lipscomb, "Queries," ibid., XXXII (December 3, 1890), 770. For dissenting views see F. S. Coal, "Divorce," ACR, XXIII (February 10, 1880), 41; R. B. Trimble, "Marriage and Divorce," ibid., XXVII (June 12, 1884), 185; B. S., "The Sanctity of Marriage," GA, XXIII (April 12, 1881), 297.

answer demanded that the current and, in their opinion, unscriptural marriage be dissolved.⁹⁴ This last stricture was recognized by the Disciples as a particularly unyielding position. John W. McGarvey lamented that he had "met but one person thus situated who . . . promised a dissolution of the unholy situation."⁹⁵

Despite the unanimity of opinion theologically, the Disciples faced the divorce question almost constantly in their periodicals. Speaking with bishop-like authority, an editor for the Apostolic Times reflected: "No one becomes aware of the extent to which this trouble prevails, until he is called to a position in which his judgment and advice are solicited by brethren."⁹⁶ Christian Church ministers bewailed the decadent social disarray caused by divorce. Elisha Sewell declared that indifference to the marriage tie

⁹⁴S. H. Hendrix, "Marriage and Divorce," ACR, XX (May 25, 1882), 173; "Queries," AT, V (May 1, 1873), 5; J. A. M., "Divorce and Marriage," ibid. (July 17, 1873), 1; "Queries and Answers," CO, VI (April 18, 1899), 249; John C. Miller, "Marriage and Divorce," CR, n.s., II (July, 1868), 208-13; Elisha G. Sewell, "Queries," GA, XX (January 24, 1877), 57; Elisha G. Sewell, "Queries," ibid., XXII (April 29, 1880), 278; David Lipscomb, "Queries," ibid., XXVII (July 15, 1885), 438; "Queries," ibid., XXIX (October 12, 1887), 648; For dissenting views see J. M. Mathes, "Querist's Department," CR, n.s., I (July, 1867), 208; Jacob Wright, "Divorce," ibid., II (June, 1868), 161-65.

⁹⁵John W. McGarvey, "Legalized Adultery," AT, IX (January 11, 1877), 17.

⁹⁶F. G. Allen, "Marriage and Divorce," ibid. (September 21, 1877), 569.

was "one of the greatest demoralizing influences of the age." He added: "The whole thing is . . . ruinous to the virtue and happiness of society."⁹⁷ The editors of the Christian Companion looked with shame upon their nation where the "divine institution of marriage is dishonored and trampled upon."⁹⁸ In his examination of the "law of marriage," a conservative evangelist mourned that the "law is nothing; misrule is the order of the times."⁹⁹ Most Disciple rhetoric on this subject was hyperbolic. Certainly this was the case with the Apostolic Times writer who declared: "Our country is overrun, almost, with divorced people."¹⁰⁰

As in the case of polygamy, this religious communion equated divorce with free love. Referring to marital annulment, the editors of the Evangelist pontificated that the "doctrines of free love have found acceptance among thousands."¹⁰¹ In a like statement, a preacher declared in the American Christian Review that the legal dissolution of marriage was only a "cloak to cover [the] lasciviousness" of

⁹⁷Elisha G. Sewell, untitled article, GA, XXXII (August 6, 1890), 503.

⁹⁸"Divorce," CC, XXIV (June, 1885), 217.

⁹⁹G. W. Ellery, "The Law of Marriage," ACR, XXIII (January 20, 1880), 17.

¹⁰⁰J. A. M., "Divorce and Marriage," 1.

¹⁰¹"Marriage and Divorce," E, XV (July 1, 1880), 418.

free lovism.¹⁰² Given the perceived threat to the American family, many Disciples demanded reform. Most of them probably would have agreed with the simplistic suggestion of an Arkansas brother. "It would be far better for society at large," he affirmed, "if our lawmakers would put it out of the power of any man or woman to get a divorce."¹⁰³

Few Disciple writers dwelled upon woman's situation when a marriage ended in divorce. However, since man worked outside the home, he could adjust with relative ease to an unmarried state. A woman's security was bound up in the perpetuation of the marital union. For this reason, David Lipscomb condemned those who advocated easier divorce proceedings. He indicated that repeated child bearing and associated domestic duties made many women "prematurely old." If annulment were easy, then uncaring husbands would leave their hoary spouses "for more youthful charms." Thus he stated that the "theory falsely called woman's rights" would cause females grief in their old age.¹⁰⁴

Since nineteenth century Americans looked upon the family as indispensable to society's survival, they sought to pro-

¹⁰²T. J. Crewson, "Divorce," ACR, XXIII (March 30, 1880), 103.

¹⁰³W. E. Steward, "Marriage and Divorce," FF, VI (May 1, 1890), 2.

¹⁰⁴David Lipscomb, "Woman's Rights and Marriage," GA, XII (December 1, 1870), 1110.

tect it against the threats of free love, polygamy, and divorce. Within this basic social unit, woman maintained her status through maternity. The adoration of motherhood was the outstanding feature of Victorian family life. Within the context of the home and by virtue of her fecundity, woman became the agent of cultural transmission. Mothers were the acknowledged guardians of morals, religion, and other values.¹⁰⁵ For the Disciples of Christ, this was a cardinal element in their comprehension of social relationships.

Most middle class Americans assumed as an article of faith that mothers had the paramount influence on a child's personality. Helen Rains, an Iowa Disciple, explained that "the mother's training . . . rather than the father's shaped the character of the children." She also emphasized that boys were "more the sons of their mothers than their fathers."¹⁰⁶ Other Christian Church writers shared this assumption. A conservative minister expressed his confidence that "mothers have more to do in molding lives of children than fathers."¹⁰⁷ Dr. J. H. Hanaford declared that woman "must be true to her mission of making men," while Olsen Norrisch wrote in Lipscomb's paper that child rearing was

¹⁰⁵Howe, "American Victorianism," 530.

¹⁰⁶Helen A. Rains, "Mothers, Their Teaching and Influence," C, XVIII (December 23, 1880), 2.

¹⁰⁷Smith, "Sermon to Women," 232.

the only work "the creator designed" for woman.¹⁰⁸ In the collective mind of the Disciples, woman was saved through her successful child raising.

This excessive praise of motherhood led to the simple belief that "good men are what their mothers made them." "The truly great and wise of all . . . nations," wrote Helen Rains, "have been blessed with the instruction of noble mothers."¹⁰⁹ This same spirit was echoed by Isaac Errett, David Lipscomb, John L. Brandt, and many others.¹¹⁰ They shared in the sentiment of a liberal minister who observed that "on learning the history of . . . successful . . . men, they were almost all the sons of praying mothers."¹¹¹

Developing out of this belief that mothers made good men was the opposite theory: bad men were their mothers' failures.

¹⁰⁸J. H. Hanaford, "Man and Woman," GA, XVI (April 30, 1874), 420; Olsen Norrisch, "Woman's Relation in Life and 'Work' in the Church," ibid., XXXV (February 23, 1893), 115. The Hanaford article originally appeared in an issue of the Christian Monitor which is no longer extant.

¹⁰⁹Rains, "Mothers, Their Teaching," 2.

¹¹⁰Isaac Errett, "Mothers Should Learn to Think," CS, III (April 25, 1868), 129; David Lipscomb, "Women in the Church," GA, XXX (November 21, 1888), 37; Brandt, Marriage, 66. For additional examples, see H. C. P., "How Shall We Teach Our Children?" CS, XIV (September 20, 1879), 299; Mrs. W. L. Moseley, "Chats with Mothers," ibid., supplement, XVII (May 20, 1882), 40; Simpson Ely, "Behold Thy Mother," ibid., XXIX (April 15, 1893), 290; Annie McCarty, letter, FF, II (February, 1886), 11.

¹¹¹H. McCollough, "Early Training," C, XVI (July 17, 1879), 3.

Whenever ministers expressed that hypothesis, however, their female listeners usually responded with strong negatives. In 1883, F. M. Bruner saw the "lack of pious, devoted preachers" as arising because there were "so few mothers worthy of such sons." He charged that too "many women would rather . . . gratify [their] ambitions and vanities than . . . be mothers of [the church's] most worthy and gifted preachers."¹¹² An enraged sister quickly replied. She questioned whether women were totally to blame for a lack of religious sons. What, she asked, happened to fathers? She answered with a devastating critique of modern capitalist society. The minds of fathers were "absorbed in 'business' . . . making 'business' their god, and their chief good." She claimed that home became "a mere boarding and sleeping place" for husbands who abandoned family "training . . . to their wives." In her opinion, every woman longed for strong support from an "affectionate co-worker" in raising children.¹¹³

A few years later, David Lipscomb and Mrs. T. P. Holman engaged in a heated exchange over the same issue. When the Fayetteville, Tennessee, housewife modestly advocated woman's right to preach, the editor reminded her of her maternal responsibilities. "Well, my dear sister," he lectured, "man

¹¹²F. M. Bruner, "Woman's Work in the Church," CE, XX (July 19, 1883), 4.

¹¹³"Too Hard on Women," ibid. (September 27, 1883), 6.

in 1840. At the advent of the Civil War, sixteen schools were associated with the church, and the next four decades witnessed a flowering of Disciple education. At century's end, they possessed 35 schools enrolling about 8,000 students.² This, however, does not include dozens of institutions which began, briefly flourished, and then quietly died for lack of financial support. Among the nationally recognized colleges associated with the Disciples of Christ were Texas Christian University, David Lipscomb College, Drake University, Butler University, and Transylvania College.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, proponents of female education were affirming that it prepared women for their "true professions" as educators and homemakers. In 1855, one of the founders of the American Woman's Educational Association, Catharine Beecher, assured the public that the organization's purpose was "to aid in securing to American women a liberal education, honorable position, and remunerative employment in their appropriate profession," being "the training of the human mind, the care of the human body in infancy and sickness, and the conservation of the family state."³ The Christian Church colleges reflected this basic

²Garrison and DeGroot, Disciples of Christ, 253; Murch, Christians Only, 201. In 1964, one Disciple scholar catalogued 485 colleges associated with the Disciples. Even accounting for multiple names for some of the same institutions, this is an impressive figure. Claude E. Spencer, cited in McAllister and Tucker, Journey in Faith, 331.

³Kathryn K. Sklar, Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven, 1973), 215, 222; Catharine Beecher,

is what his mother makes him. The great and good men are always conceded to be the work of their mothers. The bad men are just as much the work of their hands." He moralized that derelict mothers accounted for the popularity of whore houses, gambling dens, and saloons.¹¹⁴

Mrs. Holman, seven times a mother, could not allow such an insult to lie dormant. "Now we all know that Bro. Lipscomb is nearly always right," she began sweetly, "But even good Homer sometimes nods." She then directed a stinging barb at the childless editor: "People who have no children of their own have no idea what a difficult task it is to bring up children aright." She stated categorically: "mother's place is no sinecure." Without the vote and with little voice beyond the home, mothers counted themselves fortunate to save a few of their sons from the prostitute and the liquor dealer.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, Mrs. Holman agreed that woman's proper place was the home. She could think of no higher privilege in a woman's life than "rearing children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."¹¹⁶

Most Disciple women accepted without question their duties as mothers. Constantly reminded that their nurseries

¹¹⁴Lipscomb, "Women in the Church," 37.

¹¹⁵Mrs. T. P. Holman, "Are Bad Men What Their Mothers Made Them?" GA, XXXI (May 15, 1889), 306.

¹¹⁶Mrs. T. P. Holman, "Motherhood," ibid. (January 9, 1889), 25.

contained the future's hope, many women looked to the church papers for advice on child rearing. All of the weekly journals devoted at least a page to family items, but most of their articles were devotional or homiletic in nature and usually consisted of reprints from secular or denominational papers. Only rarely did the Disciples print original material on these pages. Much of their work on child rearing was devoted to broad, generalized admonitions to bring up children in the Lord's way. Mothers were constantly reminded that in the "domestic circle" they trained "up those whom God" had given them "to be statesmen, citizens, soldiers, or the rulers of empires."¹¹⁷

Given their faith in maternal influence, church writers believed firmly in environmentalism. Speaking before a Missouri Sunday school convention, Mrs. R. F. Rothwell stated bluntly that "men and women are not born, they are made."¹¹⁸ James H. Garrison echoed this belief. He boldly affirmed: "if the infant child of Sitting Bull was taken away from its savage associations and reared in a pious and wise Christian family . . . it would grow up to be an exemplary Christian." This editor also suggested that the children of thieves and outlaws were doomed because of the "unhappy influences which

¹¹⁷Mattie C. Rogers, "Woman," CM, XX (May, 1881), 211.

¹¹⁸Mrs. R. F. Rothwell, "Children an Heritage of the Lord," C, XVII (July 19, 1879), 3.

so environ them." "Birth in itself is nothing," he propounded, "but training is everything."¹¹⁹

Most of the specific admonitions given to mothers centered around their role as spiritual leaders. Amanda Bostick declared that to prepare a future mother, give the girl a "Bible and a Bible education." To her, the child's religious training was "woman's work especially and almost exclusively."¹²⁰ A few Disciples did recognize the value of juvenile literature as a supplement to the sacred writings. Delighted at his age's "discovery of children," Garrison pointed to the number of books and papers directed to them. While fifty years before, young boys and girls had only school textbooks and church catechisms, the generation of the 1880's could follow the fictional adventures of "Little Nells, Paul Dombey's, and Tom Browns." He was pleased that "the child [had] become a recognized and fundamental element of modern civilization and literature."¹²¹ Mrs. T. P. Holman shared his enthusiasm, urging parents to subscribe to such child-oriented periodicals as Youth's Companion, Pansy, Wide Awake, and St. Nicholas. Nonetheless, she hinted that parents use circumspection in allowing children to read the daily newspaper. "With its disgusting details of vice and foul crimes,"

¹¹⁹James H. Garrison, "Save the Children," CE, XXIII (February 25, 1887), 114.

¹²⁰Amanda Bostick, "Woman," GA, XIX (August 30, 1887), 539.

¹²¹James H. Garrison, "The Discovery of Children," CE, XXIV (August 18, 1887), 514.

the newspaper often became "a source of contamination to pure homes."¹²²

Among the Disciples, only Persis L. Christian demonstrated significant knowledge of educational theory. Although childless, this advocate of women preaching and voting was devoted to the concept of enhanced motherhood. She quoted with fondness the teachings of Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel. She believed deeply that mothers could prepare their children for the modern age through the scientific manipulation of children's play. "If every mother were qualified to become her own kindergartner," she averred, then a mother "would become the greatest known . . . agent for the elevation of society." Through the pages of the Christian Standard, she implored women to purchase various tracts and child training manuals by Froebel and other experts in the field. Persis Christian affirmed that the rewards were great. "The mother who is a true kindergartner in her home," she wrote, "is, at the same time, by God's own law, moulding her own character to womanly perfection."¹²³

Few Disciple women supported the outward goals of the feminist struggle for equality more than Persis Christian.

¹²²Mrs. T. P. Holman, "The Training of Children," GA, XXXI (April 10, 1889), 232.

¹²³Persis L. Christian, "Child-Life," CS, XXVIII (May 14, 1892), 412; Persis L. Christian, "Every Mother Her Own Kindergartner," ibid. (May 21, 1892), 449; Persis L. Christian, "Kindergarten Hints," ibid. (July 9, 1892), 576.

She sought for her sex the rights to vote, to preach, and to receive greater educational opportunities. Despite this, her perception of her own sex's status was bounded by the importance of morality, marriage, and motherhood. The essential ideology of true womanhood set the boundaries of a female's social role. The stereotype was all consuming. In a prize-winning essay for the Christian Monitor, Mrs. E. E. Orcutt attempted to impress upon her sisters that their "highest sphere [was] that of house-keeper, wife, and mother, [because] these duties are the cornerstone of society."¹²⁴ Justus M. Barnes was more patronizing. He believed that the "most contented little queen of the earth [was] the mistress of a true husband, a cosy cottage, a hen-coop, a cooking stove, a gentle cow, a good sewing machine, and a baby."¹²⁵

The Disciples accepted the pervasive praise of Victorian motherhood. Fearing that the family was besieged by the advocates of free love, polygamy, and divorce, and often associating these with the cause of woman's rights, they looked to home-women as the stabilizing agents in society. Rare was the young girl whose expectations were broadened beyond the home circle. Even when exposed to formal education in Disciple academies and colleges, young women had inculcated in

¹²⁴Mrs. E. E. Orcutt, "Woman and Her Work," CM, XVI (February, 1877), 73.

¹²⁵Justus M. Barnes, "Woman Her Mission, and Her Education," GA, XXVIII (July 21, 1886), 451.

them their duty to become obedient wives and praiseworthy mothers.

CHAPTER V

COLLEGES AND CAREERS

In 1972, a prominent feminist educator noted that educationally a girl was caught in a dilemma. "While encouraged to do well in school," complained Barbara Sicherman, "she has also been brought up to believe that her primary goal in life is to be a wife and mother."¹ This problem has faced advocates of female instruction since the nineteenth century. Normally the educational system preserves tradition rather than challenges the standards of society. Given this situation, the educational climate of the late Victorian period failed significantly to broaden woman's perception of her role. At both the academy and college levels young women were taught that their status was gained through marriage and motherhood. Along this same line, the professions, for which women trained, were closely associated with the perception of woman's maternal role.

Since the Disciples of Christ valued an educated clergy, they demonstrated a strong tendency to establish institutions of higher learning. Alexander Campbell led in this emphasis through the founding of Bethany College (Bethany, West Virginia)

¹Barbara Sicherman, "The Invisible Woman: The Case for Women's Studies," in W. Todd Funiss and Patricia A. Graham, eds., Women in Higher Education (Washington, D. C., 1972), 157.

trend in nineteenth century education. Consistently these institutions stressed the preparation of women for the domestic sphere and for its associated occupation of teaching in the primary grades. Robert Graham, president of Hocker College, typified this attitude. A visitor to this female academy in Lexington, Kentucky, reported that Graham did not believe in making women into men, but rather was "an advocate of everything calculated to fit the dear creatures for the noble position which God has intended them to fill."⁴

Interest by the Christian Church in female education developed as early as 1871 when W. T. Taylor, a Disciple physician, urged his brethren to encourage advanced education for young women. Although excellent male colleges and universities existed throughout the land, he found that "with the single exception of Vassar College," there was no institution where a woman could "secure a thorough collegiate education." Taylor therefore implored his church to meet this need for ambitious girls. Yet at the same time, he exemplified the ideological limitations middle class Americans placed upon woman's expectations. In his scheme of values, a few women should be trained as teachers, business women, and physicians for their own sex. But for the vast majority of women, higher

Letters to the Public on Health and Happiness (New York, 1855), quoted in ibid., 215.

⁴"Closing Exercise in Hocker College," AT, V (June 19, 1873), 5.

academic attainment should prepare them to be better wives and mothers.⁵

As Taylor and his fellow Disciples developed their rationale for woman's education, they carefully differentiated their views from appeals for the equality of the sexes. This Kentucky doctor castigated those "revolutionary dames" who would use education "to inaugurate a warfare whose object is the 'emancipation of woman.'" Instead, he wanted woman to "advance in her proper place," to become "an intelligent queen" of the home.⁶ In 1869, Isaac Errett prefaced a series of resolutions supporting domestic science courses by condemning what he considered the excesses of feminism. To him, teaching young girls "the science and duties of home-life" was in every way sensible. He prayed that women who were thus trained would "turn away in disgust from the extravagant claims put forth by some of the leading advocates of Woman's Rights."⁷ Publishing in the Christian Monitor eight years later, G. T. Carpenter disassociated himself from the free lovisism of "so-called woman's rights people." Instead, he called for a theory of woman's education which recognized "the perpetuity and sanctity of the family institution," and

⁵W. T. Taylor, "Woman's Vocation," ibid., III (October 19, 1871), 217.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Isaac Errett, "Sensible," CS, IV (July 3, 1869), 212.

which also promoted a "wise division of labor" between men and women.⁸

As long as education did not disrupt the stability of the family order, leaders of this church accepted the propriety of granting to woman an entrance into the academic world. They shared with such prominent advocates of female education as Catharine Beecher and Emma Willard the belief that women should be trained in order to enhance their maternal and social usefulness.⁹ Probably no Disciple articulated this better than Samuel Magee, a compassionate liberal minister from Illinois. He argued that school should prepare a girl "to become the wife of a working man, the mother of his children, the keeper of his house." He continued: "If colleges will help her to be that, if voting will help her to be that, then let her have colleges and suffrage; if not then she had better let them alone, and seek a better remedy."¹⁰

Despite this rather limited view of the relationship between education and woman's proper social role, at century's end some Disciples were impressed with woman's intellectual attainment. Persis L. Christian rejoiced that "young women

⁸G. T. Carpenter, "A Plea for Our Girls," CM, XVI (December, 1877), 553.

⁹Thomas Woody, A History of Women's Education in the United States (2 vols., New York, 1929), I, 397-410.

¹⁰Samuel Magee, "Are the Young Women Neglected?" CO, IX (November 17, 1892), 724.

are showing themselves quite capable of assimilating the strong, intellectual food once thought to be adapted only to masculine minds."¹¹ Other of their writers observed that early in the nineteenth century women were denied even the most basic educational opportunities. In common they complimented those women who were "guided by the civilizing influences of Christianity" and thus persevered to open the doors of education and culture.¹² With almost euphoric praise of woman's mental advancement, the Christian-Evangelist proclaimed: "the female student may not excell in footbal [sic] . . . but it is now conceded that she will hold her own in the class-room."¹³ Even the highly conservative David Lipscomb appreciated the value of "proper" higher education for women.¹⁴

Within the fellowship of the Christian Church, as well as among others of the middle class, the concept of advanced instruction for women was relatively new. Therefore, they justified this activity by falling back on the old and comfortable cliches of "true womanhood." Most American educators

¹¹Persis L. Christian, "Of Interest to Women," CS, XXVII (February 27, 1892), 180-81.

¹²For examples, see Mrs. J. M. Hughes, "What Woman has Done for Woman," CE, XXV (April 19, 1888), 228; Jessie H. Brown, "The New Womanhood," CS, XXVIII (May 6, 1893), 354; Mary L. Mendenhall, "Woman's Place and Work in the World Today," MT, X (March, 1893), 13.

¹³"Current Events," CE, XXIX (March 31, 1892), 193.

¹⁴See Lipscomb's reply following: Mrs. T. P. Holman, "The 'New Woman,'" GA, XXXVIII (July 9, 1896), 438-39.

accepted as conventional wisdom the admonitions of Willard and Beecher. Willard admonished that "housewifery might be greatly improved by being taught, not only in practice, but in theory," and Beecher urged that women be trained for the "complicated duties . . . of a housekeeper." Where, she asked, was "the institution that has as its aim the practical training of woman for . . . her sacred profession?"¹⁵ Following this philosophy, young women underwent a curriculum which emphasized the domestic arts of cooking, nursing, child rearing, and home management.

Given this inclination, writers for the Disciple papers strongly advocated the teaching of domestic science. In 1869, both Isaac Errett and Marcia Goodwin publicized and promoted the admonitions of Beecher's "American Woman's Educational Association." Meeting in Indianapolis in May, the organization recognized "the distinctive profession of" woman "as the nurse . . . of the sick, as educator of children, and as the chief minister of the family state." It then called for the endowment of institutions for instruction in "Domestic Economy."¹⁶ Twenty-five years later, Mrs. T. P. Holman declared that schools must emphasize those courses needed to train a girl in "the most practical branches necessary to

¹⁵Woody, History of Women's Education, I, 400-401.

¹⁶"Woman's Education," AH, I (August, 1869), 119; Errett, "Sensible," 212.

her domestic happiness."¹⁷ The same spirit prevailed on the Christian Companion's editorial staff. This woman's magazine affirmed that "our daughters" should be educated "so they will be keepers at home, true, brave, and wise."¹⁸

Disciple authors continually reassured young girls that an education made them better wives. Mrs. Mary E. Irwin, a contributor to the Christian Standard, criticized harshly the "poor and selfish, and low-minded" husband who kept his spouse "in ignorance, in order that she may more fully minister to his wants." Such an unfortunate wife soon experienced marital disillusionment. How much more beautiful, she suggested, was the woman who brought into the family union an improved mind thus strengthening her "capability as housekeeper, mother, teacher, and friend."¹⁹

The Disciples repeatedly emphasized that motherhood benefitted from better female education and frequently complained that this role was entered into without an adequate foundation. Mrs. T. P. Holman lamented "few women [had] any sort of educational or preparatory equipment for this royal profession." She concluded sadly that "the crying want" of the nineteenth century was for women who possessed "an intelligent comprehension of the duties of motherhood." When

¹⁷Mrs. T. P. Holman, "The Proper Education of Our Daughters," GA, XXXVI (April 12, 1894), 24.

¹⁸"Education of Women," CC, XXV (November, 1886), 368.

¹⁹Mrs. Mary E. Irwin, "The Capability of Women," CS, IX (August 29, 1874), 273.

a prominent member of Tennessee's Women's Christian Temperance Union averred that "the training of mothers will be the chief corner stone of a higher, purer, nobler civilization," Mrs. Holman added: "with all my heart I agree."²⁰

Both liberal and conservative church spokesmen supported her ideas on training mothers. In 1872, a conservative minister propounded that "no woman whose mind is uncultivated is fit to become a wife and mother."²¹ Writing at the same time, a correspondent of the Christian Monitor could not comprehend why the better colleges excluded women when the world was desperate for better primary teachers and better mothers.²² As late as 1893, Jessie H. Brown expressed this thought. While praising "the new womanhood," she observed that just as males needed training to become bankers and merchants, women should be taught to be wives and mothers. "Surely it takes less power of mind and discipline of character to count money," she emphasized, "than it takes to make a home and to develop souls."²³

Some Disciple sisters argued that educating girls for a profession helped avoid undesirable marriages. Amanda

²⁰Mrs. T. P. Holman, "Wanted--Mothers," GA, XXXIX (April 1, 1897), 198.

²¹D. R. Duncan, "A Sermon," ACR, XV (December 10, 1872), 393.

²²F. K. Kile, "Shall Our Girls Go to College," CM, XII (January, 1873), 19.

²³Jessie H. Brown, "The New Womanhood," 354.

Bostick, a frequent contributor to the Gospel Advocate, pointed out that an unlearned young woman was forced "to sell herself in marriage." A woman with professional training could afford to wait until she found the husband to whom she would devote her life.²⁴

A more frequently used variation on this theme exhorted girls to prepare for a trade in case they never married, were widowed, or were forced to support an incapacitated spouse. With this in mind, Mrs. Mary Irwin urged members of her sex to fit themselves "for some useful employment," even if they were "never compelled to resort to it for a livelihood."²⁵ Ellen E. Dickenson presented a similar message in the Christian Monitor. She implored women to seek out a profession because a wife might at any time be deprived of her husband.²⁶ Mrs. T. P. Holman agreed. Although she believed firmly that men were "the breadwinners," and women "the bread-makers," she counted sixteen states where females outnumbered males. Under those circumstances, she counseled that some girls should be educated to support themselves in an unmarried condition.²⁷

²⁴Amanda Bostick, "Girl Training," GA, XXVIII (May 19, 1886), 308.

²⁵Mrs. Mary E. Irwin, "The Capability of Women," 273.

²⁶Ellen E. Dickenson, "American Women as Skilled Workers," CM, XX (October, 1881), 449-50.

²⁷Mrs. T. P. Holman, "The Training of Our Daughters," GA, XXXI (May 1, 1889), 273.

The Disciple rationale for female education can be summarized in a few statements. Girls should be liberally educated in the domestic sciences. Through such training they became more satisfying helpmates for their husbands and better mothers for their children. In addition, a woman ought to prepare for a career in the event that she never married or was at some point denied the benefits of a breadwinner. A survey of Disciple schools and colleges demonstrates that they practiced what they preached.

By the end of the century most of the Christian Church colleges probably admitted women. Making generalizations about these institutions, however, is difficult since many flourished for a brief time and then simply disappeared. Often the only trace left is a brief mention in a personal memoir or an occasional advertisement in the nineteenth century Disciple papers.²⁸ Schools for which information is available fell into three basic categories: those that admitted only women; those that were co-educational from their inceptions after the Civil War; and those male colleges

²⁸William E. Tucker, president of Bethany College, observed in an address to the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on October 25, 1977: "Few of us . . . have more than a smattering of knowledge about our defunct institutions. . . . Do the names of Floral Hill College, Plattsburg College, Rockport College, Holden College, Ash Grove College, Lafayette College and Laclede Seminary mean anything at all to you? Each of these schools was established in the State of Missouri between 1876 and 1884 and now lies in ruin." William E. Tucker, "Dispersing the Fog: Disciples and Their Colleges," Discipliana, XXXVIII (Fall, 1978), 36.

that eventually opened their doors to women. In 1896, a liberal minister reviewed the educational attainment of the Disciple sisters and proclaimed that the "young men of our institutions . . . have no superiority over the young women in . . . depth of learning."²⁹ Whatever validity that statement might contain, in reality the Disciples viewed female education in the context of "true womanhood" rather than with the assumption of sexual equality.

Most Disciple women who sought an advanced education, attended female academies and colleges. Consistently these institutions advertised their desire to prepare women for their proper roles as homemakers or as teachers of the primary grades. The latter was universally acknowledged as a proper maternal outlet for unmarried women. All of these schools assumed that a girl's training should differ significantly from a boy's. The short-lived Murfreesboro Institute (in Tennessee) probably carried this to an extreme by offering both the "Mistress of Arts" and "Mistress of English Literature" degrees.³⁰

Among those female institutions associated with the Christian Church, Daughter's College in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, best articulated their philosophy of woman's instruction.

²⁹D. R. Dungan, "The Woman Question," CE, XXXIII (January 23, 1896), 54.

³⁰J. F. L., "The Final at Murfreesboro Institute," GA, XXI (June 12, 1879), 374.

This "school for the higher education of young ladies," prided itself upon its teacher education curriculum. Declaring that this was woman's "natural vocation," it implied that members of the female sex were "not trained for [their] proper sphere until [they] learned to teach and govern the young." The school catalogue also assured concerned parents that such an education enhanced the "domestic" vocation. "No time [was] lost by such training," it emphasized, should the girl "never become a professional teacher." Not only did instruction in this profession aid a young woman as wife and mother, but it also provided a career should she be widowed or suffer economic misfortune. "These reverses come to all," warned the proprietors, "and neither ample legacies nor judicious investments can prevent them."³¹

Although not as blatant in their statements, virtually the same concepts prevailed at such academies and colleges as Hope Institute (Nashville), the Female Orphan School of the Christian Church (now William Woods College, Fulton, Missouri), Mt. Vernon Female Seminary (Mt. Vernon, Ohio), Christian College (Columbia, Missouri), and in at least a half dozen other female schools. Among these, the Fanning Orphan School near Nashville, Tennessee, merits special notice because of its association with David Lipscomb.

³¹Daughters College [catalogue] (Harrodsburg, Kentucky, 1881), 7-8; ibid. (1886), 7; ibid. (1891), 7.

Fanning was an academy constructed on the site of two previous Disciple schools, Franklin College and Hope Institute, both of which had been associated with Tolbert Fanning. In 1881, Lipscomb appealed for funds to create the orphan school because the late Fanning and his wife Charlotte desired to save "the unfortunate and helpless . . . girls of our land, from lives of ignorance and shame." Although the institution was open to non-orphans, the Gospel Advocate editor accentuated its benefits for parentless girls. Without this school, they would "not only become pests and burdens to society," but also "the mothers and trainers of generations of criminals." Known for his practical nature, Lipscomb reasoned that it was "much cheaper to educate and train mothers to lives of usefulness" than to incarcerate their failures.³²

The Fanning Orphan School opened its doors in September, 1884, and two years later the trustees elected Lipscomb's nephew and namesake superintendent and the younger Lipscomb's wife matron. They served six years. Childless and sympathetic to the plight of poor girls, the Gospel Advocate editor looked upon this as a labor of love. He desired to create an environment which embraced morality, religion, and "such intellectual culture" adequate to prepare young women

³²David Lipscomb, "An Appeal," GA, XXIII (July 28, 1881), 468; David Lipscomb, "The Purpose of the Fanning Orphan School," ibid., XXIV (March 30, 1882), 196.

in "those callings for which their natural capacities and taste fit them."³³ Charlotte Fanning was pleased with the school. Referring to its superintendent and his wife, she encouraged the school's students to thank "Mrs. Lipscomb for her instruction in what renders home a place of enjoyment," and to appreciate their blessings in studying under Lipscomb whose Bible classes taught them to be "thoughtful, prudent, modest and lady-like."³⁴ These lessons were well learned. Twenty years after the Fanning Orphan School opened, one of its female teachers pointed out that many alumni had entered those "positions in the business world . . . open to women." But the great majority, she added, were "filling the noblest and best position a woman can fill--that of wife and mother."³⁵

These female institutions worked under the assumption that coeducation was undesirable. The proprietors of Daughters College condemned "mixed schools" as a "satire upon the family." If companionship with young women was supposed to profit young men, it suggested ominously "that all such benefit [was] at the expense of the girls." Daughters College believed that after the age of ten or twelve, the sexes

³³West, David Lipscomb, 180-82; Emma Page, "History of the Fanning Orpahn School," in James E. Scobey, ed., Franklin College and Its Influences (Nashville, 1906), 387.

³⁴Charlotte Fanning, "Suggestions to Our Girls," GA, XXIV (June 8, 1887), 364.

³⁵Page, "Fanning Orpahn School," 393.

should be educated separately and along divergent paths.³⁶

During the 1870's, David Lipscomb shared these sentiments. After a brief visit to a Baptist college in Waco, Texas, he declared that its practice of co-education was "an experiment of doubtful propriety."³⁷ Then in late 1874 and early 1875, he prepared a series of articles decrying mixed schools. Only the "progressive, radical element, that upturns and overturns all the existing affairs of society" favored co-education. He remonstrated that girls and boys should never be brought together "when they are large enough for the development of the animal or sexual impulses." Without a doubt this practice was the beginning of "the road that ends in free-love." Lipscomb pointed out that the spirit of sexual license and "loose views of marriage" prevailed in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan where such mixed schools were common. This malignancy also existed in the South. He lamented that southern girls had attended co-educational institutions associated with the Christian Church and "returned prostitutes."³⁸ For Lipscomb the campaign against co-education was a question of sexual morality and true Christians desired to protect a woman's chastity.

³⁶Daughters College (1881), 29-30; ibid. (1886), 24-25; ibid. (1891), 22.

³⁷David Lipscomb, "Notes on Travel," GA, XIV (July 25, 1872), 708.

³⁸David Lipscomb, "Co-Education," ibid., XVI (September 24, 1874), 905-6; ibid. (November 12, 1874), 1073; ibid., XVII (January 1, 1875), 20-22.

Neither the proprietors of Daughters College nor David Lipscomb spoke for a majority of Christian Church educators. A number of their schools, which were founded just before and shortly after the Civil War, accepted male-female classes from their beginnings. Included among these were Add-Ran College (now Texas Christian University), North-Western Christian University (now Butler University), Hiram College (Hiram, Ohio), Eureka College (Eureka, Illinois), and West Tennessee Christian College (Henderson, Tennessee). Despite their willingness to provide classroom instruction for females, these institutions usually expected young men and young women to accept traditional sex-related careers.

Eminence College near Louisville, Kentucky, called special attention to its policy of mixed education. The institution's president, W. S. Giltner, proudly affirmed that his school was "one of the leaders in . . . testing and proving the value of the co-education of the sexes."³⁹ In 1872, a writer for the Apostolic Times agreed, claiming that Eminence was the only Kentucky college educating men and women together.⁴⁰

Giltner looked upon himself as an apostle for this cause. Speaking before the small graduating class of 1872, he

³⁹W. S. Giltner, "Co-Education," ibid., XVI (August 6, 1874), 740. This article prompted Lipscomb's harsh assessment of educating boys and girls together.

⁴⁰"Eminence College," AT, IV (June 27, 1872), 4.

extolled the virtues of co-education. "The time has come," he announced, "when that monkish institution--the male college--should be abolished." In its place, he desired schools that stressed an "equality of opportunity and equality of education" for both sexes. The Eminence president suggested that co-education improved the level of scholarship for males and females alike. It made the boys into gentlemen and refined the girls into ladies. In response to critics of his system, he asked rhetorically whether a mixed education led women to become "blatant advocates of 'woman's rights'" or caused them to march in "the advanced wing of the free-love party?" If this was the case, he answered, "then away with all schemes for liberal education of woman." In his opinion classroom competition with boys gave to a girl that sense of confidence which accented those "womanly qualities that make her peculiarly an object of love and admiration."⁴¹

Giltner's views of co-education fell short of advocating the equality of the sexes. The academic and social policies followed by Eminence College indicated that it did not significantly broaden a woman's vistas. Despite its designation as co-educational, the two sexes entered different curricula. While men trained for the ministry and business, women were guided into teaching and domestic science. According to the

⁴¹W. S. Giltner, "The Educational Problem," in Catalogue . . . of Eminence College, for . . . 1872 (Louisville, Kentucky, 1872), 26-31.

school catalogue for 1873, boys and girls met together only during chapel.⁴² Three years later, however, this was modified to allow the sexes to associate in those classes which coincided in their separate courses of study. In addition, the institution's social life emphasized woman's domesticity. Female students boarded with "the family of the president" where a home-like environment was maintained. Males lived in a dormitory.⁴³ In 1869, a small event further illustrated the status of woman at Eminence. During the graduation exercises, the president awarded "a silver cake-knife to Miss Nannie Hudson, for being the neatest housekeeper of the institution." An observer noted with satisfaction that "her education in this, as in all other respects, has not been neglected."⁴⁴ Eminence College proudly called itself experimental in training men and women together, but in common with most colleges of its time, the school viewed woman in the context of traditional roles.

Suprisingly, David Lipscomb came ultimately to accept co-education. Despite his earlier harsh critique of the practice, his attitude had changed significantly by the century's last decade. In 1891, he and James A. Harding col-

⁴²Catalogue . . . of Eminence College, for . . . 1873
(Cincinnati, 1873), 22-23.

⁴³Catalogue . . . of Eminence College, for . . . 1876
(Cincinnati, 1876), 19.

⁴⁴Observer, "Eminence College," ACR, XII (June 29, 1869), 202.

laborated to open the Nashville Bible School (now David Lipscomb College) and advertised that "anyone, male or female, wishing to study the Bible will be received."⁴⁵ Why Lipscomb's philosophy altered is unclear. Nonetheless he hoped to create a school with scriptural studies at the core of the curriculum where both sexes would be prepared "in every field of usefulness in which Christian men and women should act."⁴⁶

Some of Lipscomb's conservative brethren feared that he was training women for the ministry. He took care to reassure them. Under the heading "Female Students," the catalogue of the Nashville Bible School expressed its faith that women should not "be public lecturers or preachers." Females had other duties. Since womankind had the responsibility of "training almost all children until they were twelve or fifteen years of age," Lipscomb believed that women students should be encouraged to develop intellectually.⁴⁷ To him both the mistress of the classroom and the mother in the nursery fulfilled woman's intended place.

⁴⁵James A. Harding, "The Nashville Bible School," GA, XXXIV (August 4, 1892), 485.

⁴⁶David Lipscomb, "The Nashville Bible School," GA, XXXVI (July 5, 1894), 414. In his study of David Lipscomb's philosophy of education, Robert E. Hooper was unable to explain this change in attitude. Robert E. Hooper, "The Political and Educational Ideas of David Lipscomb," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1965), 219.

⁴⁷Catalogue of the Nashville Bible School . . . 1897-98 (Nashville, 1897), 10-11.

At least two male institutions, Bethany College in West Virginia, and the College of the Bible (now Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky), eventually opened their classes to women. As a liberal arts school, the former had little difficulty adjusting to female students. On the other hand, the integration of the theological seminary was somewhat more traumatic. Both colleges demonstrated the limited expectations Disciples had for the female sex.

Faced with dire financial difficulties, Bethany College quietly encouraged women to enter in the fall of 1880. No reference to this new departure appeared in the church papers until the following spring. In May, 1881, a correspondent to the Christian Standard stated with uncertainty that "it is generally known, I believe, that Bethany has admitted ladies."⁴⁸

The college's first women students left little record of their experiences, but a male student's sophomoric verse indicated their modest demeanor:

Four ladies charming, as you see;
Miss Campbell, Darsie, Grissim, Lee,
Adorn our class with every grace,
And ought to have the highest place,
Their modest learning, free from pride,
A luster sheds on every side;
The fair sex still (though fools may laugh)
To me appears the better half.⁴⁹

⁴⁸E. J. G., "Bethany College," CS, XVI (May 14, 1881), 154.

⁴⁹Daniel Scott, "Bethany College," ibid. (July 9, 1881), 218.

Isaac Errett, a strong Bethany supporter, shared this enthusiasm. Proud that the college had admitted women, he proclaimed that it would prepare "our daughters" in their "God-given work in life." In his view, proper female instruction led to "educated mothers" who would "prove our surest guarantee for . . . posterity." He concluded: "A noble and intelligent people can only spring from mothers trained in the high qualities of Christian education."⁵⁰ Errett expected Bethany to perpetuate the values of "true womanhood."

If the West Virginia college adjusted with ease to co-education, the first woman to enter the College of the Bible created a small storm. John W. McGarvey, its president, was an adamant opponent of female ordination and he could not envision a woman entering his ministerial school. As a matter of policy, however, students at the College of the Bible had access to classes in Kentucky University (Transylvania College). Although the reverse was also true, no Kentucky University co-ed attempted to enter McGarvey's institution prior to 1895. That year the university's pres-

⁵⁰Isaac Errett, "Ladies' Boarding Hall at Bethany," ibid., XVII (August 26, 1882), 269. Evidently the association of males and females at Bethany did little to alter the image of woman among the students. An article, which appeared in the school's literary magazine for 1894, praised the values of true womanhood. Its author proclaimed: "In my feeble opinion, there is no star above the horizon to compare with woman's save the star of Bethlehem. She alone illuminates our dismal path through this world and the halo of her purity . . . will certainly guide us to our final home." "Woman," The Bethany Collegian, XII (January, 1894), 53-57.

ident, Charles L. Loos, enrolled Gustine Courson in McGarvey's sacred history class. Although Miss Courson intended to become a foreign missionary, McGarvey resisted her admission. Both presidents were close friends, but Loos believed in a more active church role for women than did McGarvey and he saw this as an opportunity to prove a point. McGarvey relented, but only on certain conditions. Miss Courson could enter his class if she arrived after all the male students were seated; if she sat quietly in the back row; if she asked no questions and spoke to no one; and if at the lesson's close she departed before the class dismissed. McGarvey further stipulated that on those days when he judged the text material too delicate and embarrassing for female ears, he would place a note on her desk and she was to withdraw quietly.⁵¹

Somehow news of this controversy found its way into the Associated Press. Miss Courson, who considered herself "anything but a suffragette at heart," was profoundly uncomfortable. She immediately begged Loos to allow her to leave the class. He would not relent, reminding her that she had breeched McGarvey's resistance. In latter years, she recalled how Loos then arose from his chair and with "a Napoleonic voice" commanded: "Forward young lady. The doors have been

⁵¹Dwight G. Stevenson, Lexington Theological Seminary, 1865-1965 (St. Louis, 1964), 125-26.

opened to women! Go!"⁵² Loos' prediction was premature. Despite Miss Courson's courage, the College of the Bible did not invite female students until 1904. By then McGarvey had become convinced that a theological education benefitted those women who wished to teach children in the Sunday School. He remained a staunch foe of women preaching.⁵³

Those colleges and academies associated with the Christian Church forcefully resisted significant change in women's social status. In common, they assumed that woman's natural disposition fitted her to instruct children. Only under the most unusual circumstances could they imagine a woman becoming anything other than a wife, a mother, or a school teacher. Scattered clues in their periodicals suggest that few of the Disciple sisters strayed far from the kitchen or the classroom.

Christian Church writers generally overestimated the career opportunities open to women. In 1889, Mrs. E. E. C. Glaiser gave thanks in the Missionary Tidings that American womanhood stood prepared to enter "the learned professions," the avenues of trade, industrial enterprises, and other careers once barred to her sex.⁵⁴ Likewise, Mrs. T. P. Holman

⁵²Ibid., 126-27; Gustine Courson Weaver, "A Glimpse into the Home of One of Our Greatest Ministers," CE, XLI (December 27, 1923), 1657.

⁵³Stevenson, Lexington Theological Seminary, 127.

⁵⁴Mrs. E. E. C. Glasier, "Our Thanksgiving," MT, VII (November, 1889), 12.

recalled that in the 1840's only the occupations of teacher, seamstress, boarding-house keeper, and domestic servant were open to woman. Fifty years later, she counted nearly three hundred careers beckoning females. She added parenthetically, however, that there were "many trades and professions . . . we would prefer . . . our daughters . . . not follow."⁵⁵ Isaac Errett also shared in this praise of women in occupations. "The trades, the professions, [and] business correspondence . . . are ready to their hand," he observed, "and a lady who wishes to support herself is not . . . compelled to choose between teaching and sewing." Nonetheless, he reminded his sisters to "not forget the burden of the sweetest song in our language. . . . 'Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.'"⁵⁶

Disciple support for women in non-domestic careers was not universal. In 1871, a business woman complained that her brethren hampered those women who engaged in a profession. Recalling the New Testament example of a female merchant, she claimed theologians forgot that "St. Paul . . . exhorted them to help Lydia in her business." Instead, the male sex had consistently treated the professional woman as if an occupation soiled her "fine character." She argued that man's treatment of a working woman would "send her to Paradise by

⁵⁵Mrs. T. P. Holman, "The Training of Girls," 273.

⁵⁶Isaac Errett, "Friendly Talk with the Girls," CS, VII (April 27, 1872), 131.

way of starvation."⁵⁷

J. H. Hanaford, the physician who regularly contributed to the Christian Monitor, probably exemplified the attitude of many Disciple males toward women in the professions. While he believed that by nature woman was most fit for the domestic sphere, he could find no legal barriers to the female sex "competing with man in all the professions." Nonetheless, he had severe reservations about women entering extra-domestic life. Although he asserted women could enter the medical profession, he doubted that many of their sex would patronize them and maintained that they lacked the stamina to perform surgery. Because a woman's natural disposition consisted of too much "kindness of heart and mercy," she lacked the judgment of "the sterner sex" in life and death struggles. This doctor also vaguely suggested that female stockbrokers and lawyers would "come to grief." Only in the teaching realm did he feel woman was "well adapted." He admonished that "in the management of the younger class of pupils . . . her influence in winning, and molding character . . . is almost unlimited."⁵⁸

Given the attitude of Errett, Hanaford, and other male and female Disciples, few Christian Church women sought

⁵⁷Memor, "A Woman's View of the Situation," CM, X (January, 1871), 18.

⁵⁸J. H. Hanaford, "Woman and Labor," ibid., XIII (November, 1874), 484.

careers beyond the home. Doubtless many women in this religious communion entered non-domestic occupations without calling attention to themselves in the church papers. Disciple periodicals revealed only a handful who entered the professions of preaching, writing, teaching, and medicine. While the papers hinted that some women engaged in business, there is no evidence that any of their women practiced law. With the possible exception of Marcia Goodwin, none of these professional women were prominent beyond their religious fellowship and none avidly supported the cause of woman's rights.

Among the new career opportunities open to Disciple women, preaching was the most controversial. Despite the lengthy debate over the right of the female sex to the pulpit, few Christian Church sisters sought ordination. Clara Babcock, their first recognized minister, took pains to emphasize her motherhood, and, with the exception of advocating woman's ordination, she never published any articles in the church papers supporting a feminist cause.⁵⁹ Almost nothing is known about the handful of others who aspired to clerical privileges. The little evidence that survives suggests that many were wives who sought ordination in order to assist their preacher-husbands.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Clara C. Babcock, "Woman in the Pulpit," CS, XXVIII (June 4, 1892), 482.

⁶⁰Various preacher lists for the Christian Church printed names with the initials only and with no indication of sex;

One of the church's strongest advocates of woman's ordination, Marcia M. Bassett Goodwin, engaged in the profession of publishing. From 1863 until her death in 1885, she edited several ladies' magazines, including the American Housewife, the Christian Monitor, the Ladies' Christian Monitor, Mothers' Monitor, and Christian Companion. Among the Disciple sisters, she least fit the image of "true womanhood." Unfortunately she left little in the way of autobiographical material and her contemporaries did nothing more than praise her good Christian character. Little is known about her personality or how it developed. In 1869, she helped organize a woman's suffrage convention in Indianapolis; in 1872, she published a monthly suffrage column in the American Housewife; and in her last years, she was one of the most vocal advocates of women preaching in the Christian Church.⁶¹ Nonetheless, her dedication to the cause of equal rights for men and women was not strong. She opened the pages of her papers to strongly worded anti-feminist writers, most notably Dr. J. H. Hanaford, and her publications were universally praised by prominent male Disciples as divergent

ie., Mrs. Clara C. Babcock became C. C. Babcock. Yearbook of the Disciples of Christ (St. Louis, 1895), 53.

⁶¹Stanton, History of Woman's Suffrage, III, 533; Miss M. F. Burlingame, "The Shrieking Sisterhood vrs. the Shrieking Brotherhood," AH, IV (December, 1872), 379-80. The latter item was listed under the heading "Suffrage Column." No other issue of the American Housewife is extant for 1872 and the column does not appear after that date.

as Isaac Errett and David Lipscomb.⁶²

The occupation most often entered into by Disciple women was teaching. This activity is difficult to evaluate as a profession. Some women were reasonably well trained at the various colleges and female academies. Others simply inflicted their little learning upon restless pupils while waiting for an offer of marriage. For two vocal Disciple sisters, Marinda R. Lemert and Mrs. T. P. Holman, the teaching experience broadened their perception of woman's social status.

Marinda Lemert, who advocated woman's ordination while opposing other woman's rights causes, had a long career in various Ohio primary schools. A eulogist reminisced that in the classroom she won over her students through "a sunny, winning disposition," and through a "deep interest in the personal welfare of those under her care." Baptized at the age of twenty, she possessed a profound sense of piety and her numerous articles demonstrated a keen mind for theological disputation. The combination of her teaching career and her biblical studies convinced Mrs. Lemert "that woman's talents and abilities had been held down, repressed, and largely lost to the church."⁶³ She probably wrote more articles favoring

⁶²Isaac Errett, "How May Women Labor in the Gospel," CS, VII (March 30, 1872), 101; David Lipscomb, "The Christian Monitor," GA, XXIV (February 16, 1882), 99.

⁶³R. H. and I. L. Moss, "Lemert," CS, XXVII (October 24, 1891), 903; Mrs. M. R. Lemert, "To the Sisters--Daughters of

female preaching and praying than any other Disciple sister. Nonetheless, she fell far short of promoting other women's causes. In late 1879, she published in the American Christian Review a strongly worded article "disclaiming sympathy with the sentiments of the 'Woman's Rights' party, because [she] thought them destructive to the headship of man."⁶⁴ Thus in a later article she reasoned that while "unmarried women may preach, married women [were] to be in subjection to their husbands."⁶⁵ On another occasion she argued that a wife's duty to her husband excluded "her from the political arena" and deprived her of the ballot.⁶⁶ Marinda R. Lemert's logic suggests that her teaching career awakened in her a longing for greater personal fulfillment, but the imagery of "true womanhood" was so strong as to limit her grasp.

Mrs. T. P. Holman, the nemesis of David Lipscomb on a number of woman-related issues, also began her adult life

of the Lord Almighty," ACR, XXVII (April 24, 1884), 133; Mrs. M. R. Lemert, "A Few Sketches," ibid. (July 31, 1884), 241. For an example of her drawing upon her teaching experience to make a point, see Mrs. M. R. Lemert, "Let the Women Keep Silence," CR, n.s., III (January, 1884), 7.

⁶⁴Mrs. M. R. Lemert, "A Protest," ACR, XXIII (February 3, 1880), 37. She refers to an earlier article which is no longer extant.

⁶⁵Mrs. M. R. Lemert, "Keep Silence Wives," GA, XXX (June 13, 1888), 5. David Lipscomb commented at the article's end that in the first century "the Holy Spirit was poured upon all alike, but no woman ever prophesied, prayed or spoke in public in the days of Christ and the apostles."

⁶⁶Mrs. M. R. Lemert, "Should Women Pray Aloud in Church," CS, XX (December 25, 1886), 413.

as a school teacher. A personal tragedy during the Civil War forced her into the classroom as an instructor. Her father, a Confederate soldier, was killed, leaving her mother with "a house full of girls . . . and a baby boy." At the age of fourteen, Mrs. Holman was the oldest child and, as she later recalled, she possessed "a moderately good education for a girl of my age." She therefore created an informal classroom by gathering together the neighborhood children and later she secured a better position in a local school. With Horatio Alger-like conquest over adversity, she supported her widowed mother, educated her sisters and brother, and even paid the mortgage on their homestead.⁶⁷

Although her struggle against misfortune left her antagonistic to the platitudes of "true womanhood," her personal philosophy remained in sympathy with the cult's basic tenets. She railed against the hypocrisy of those males who extolled woman's virtues and who at the same time could think of "no misfortune on earth . . . equal to having a housefull of girls." By the 1890's this former teacher rejoiced at the expanded career opportunities open to single women. Nonetheless, she looked upon female suffrage as at best a necessary evil, and she adamantly affirmed her belief that "the happiest and best life for a woman [was] to be . . . married

⁶⁷Mrs. T. P. Holman, "The New Woman," GA, XXXVIII (July 16, 1896), 452-53.

with children of her own growing up around her."⁶⁸ Still, Mrs. Holman's strongest discourses on maternity failed to satisfy David Lipscomb. In 1897, she praised as beneficial the "Congress of Mothers" which had recently assembled in Washington, D. C.⁶⁹ Replying, Lipscomb doubted whether "the spinsters and childless wives who make up these conventions [could] furnish much knowledge that [would] benefit true wives and mothers."⁷⁰

Within limited confines, Disciple males approved of women entering medical careers. In their minds, a female doctor could minister to her own sex and to children. The Christian Standard commented with pleasure in 1892 that "women physicians . . . received a welcome even from their non-professional sisters."⁷¹ Despite this attitude only one Christian Church woman called attention to her medical work in the church papers.

In 1881 and 1882, several Disciple periodicals recognized the work of Dr. Augusta Smith. James M. Mathes, editor of the Christian Record, described her as a "highly cultivated Christian lady," whose "New Process Cure Treatment" was

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Silena Moore [Mrs. T. P.] Holman, "A Congress of Mothers," ibid., XXXIX (May 27, 1897), 325.

⁷⁰David Lipscomb, "Home Life, Home Duties, Home Religion," ibid.

⁷¹"A Good Measure," CS, XXVIII (March 19, 1892), 254.

a great improvement over traditional approaches to female disorders.⁷² Although her actual academic background was never specified, Dr. Smith claimed to have developed her method after "TWENTY FIVE YEARS of study and labor" and she promised to diagnose and treat all cases by mail.⁷³ Mrs. Alexander Campbell was included among her satisfied patients. Assuring everyone that Dr. Smith was "a reality and no fiction," this respected widow expressed great interest "in Sister Smith's prosperity as a medical laborer . . . in behalf of women."⁷⁴ Throughout 1882, Dr. Smith's career was extolled by the Christian Record, the Evangelist, and the Christian Standard. After that year, she disappeared from Disciple records.⁷⁵

These career-minded women probably represented only a small fraction of their professional sisters within the Christian Church fellowship, and an even smaller percentage of all Disciple women. Given the nature of female education

⁷²James M. Mathes, "Editor's Table," CR, n.s., I (June, 1882), 187. See similar statements in ibid. (June-November, 1882), passim.

⁷³Dr. Augusta Smith, "An Open Letter to the Women of America," ibid. (June, 1882), n.p.

⁷⁴Mrs. Alexander Campbell, "Letter from Mrs. Alexander Campbell," ibid. (July, 1882), 206. See also Mrs. Alexander Campbell, "From Mrs. Alexander Campbell," CS, XVI (August 20, 1881), 170 [sic., 270].

⁷⁵Dr. Augusta Smith, "Why Are We Sick?" E, XVII (May 18, 1882), 311; Dr. Augusta Smith, "Timely Suggestions," ibid. (June 22, 1882), 391.

and the overwhelming cultural emphasis upon "true womanhood," only rarely did any woman seek fulfillment through a profession. Most were satisfied within the context of wifehood and motherhood.

If a college education and the professions failed significantly to broaden a woman's opportunities, the realm of reform was much more fruitful. Enraged motherhood, battling against the saloon and the prostitute, gained sympathy for female suffrage. Among the Disciples of Christ, the crusade for woman's right to vote came by way of true womanhood rather than through the rhetoric of male-female equality.

CHAPTER VI

THE EXPEDIENCY OF WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE

Suffrage was the most visible and controversial of the issues associated with woman's changing status after 1865. Beginning with the Woman's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, the question of women voting aroused strong emotions among middle class Americans. Citizenship and its corresponding privileges held out the alluring promise of personal autonomy so longed for by dedicated feminist reformers. Educational opportunities, more equal laws of marriage and divorce, and the opening of careers to women were goals which would lead to success only after years of patient plodding. On the other hand, the ballot offered an excellent expedient for accomplishing these desired ends.

For almost a half century after the first woman's convention, suffragists argued without success that the equality of all adults justified the vote for their sex. They were defeated by the cult of "true womanhood." Assuming that woman's place was the home, anti-suffrage speakers feared the destruction of domestic tranquility caused by infusing politics into the family circle.

In her study of the ideology associated with woman's suffrage, Aileen S. Kraditor observed that at the end of the nineteenth century, a basic shift occurred in the affirmative

arguments for female voting. Prior to the 1890's, such advocates as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton relied upon the rationale of "justice." Born in the egalitarian rhetoric of Jacksonian America, it assumed that the appeals to the equality of man applied to woman as well. By the 1890's, however, this logic had failed significantly to alter political realities. The ideology shifted from "justice" to "expediency" or the belief that woman's suffrage would benefit society. When suffragists maintained that given the ballot their sex would rid the commonwealth of saloons, prostitution, child labor, and corrupt politics, they struck a responsive chord within the social fabric of middle class thought.¹ The expediency argument was a simple variation on "true womanhood": the more pious and moral sex desired the suffrage to protect their homes.

The Disciples of Christ generally rejected arguments for woman's suffrage which were based upon the rhetoric of justice. In common with other middle class Americans, they associated the campaign for male-female equality with those radicals within the feminist movement that were advocating free love and easy divorce. Having associated women voting with the onus of sexual immorality, the Disciples believed

¹Kraditor, Woman Suffrage Movement, 43-75. Alan P. Grimes has suggested that the expediency argument succeeded in gaining the vote for women in the western states prior to 1900. He indicated that the historian should "look beyond the issue of equal rights for women and inquire as to who in America thought

it would lead to the family's destruction.² Only at century's end did a few of their writers use the arguments of justice. Almost without exception, their debate centered upon the question whether society was best served by passive, voteless mothers, quietly training their children in the home, or by politically active mothers campaigning against those social evils which threatened to ensnare their sons and daughters.

Writing for the liberal New Christian Quarterly, J. L. Parsons was one of the few Disciples who used the reasoning of justice. Basing his position upon the "all men are created equal" clause in the Declaration of Independence, he insisted that "men and women differ only in the accident of sex." If man had a natural right to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness, then woman possessed the same privileges. When denied the opportunities of citizenship, females were placed at best on the level of minors, idiots, or "demented persons," and at worst were considered as "chattels . . . beneath the dignity of a human being." With emphasis, he asserted: "no intelligent man in this country

they would gain power if women voted." In the rugged anarchy of the West, supporters of social order advocated female suffrage hoping to secure prohibition and anti-prostitution laws. Alan P. Grimes, The Puritan Ethic and Woman's Suffrage (New York, 1967), x-xii.

²Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement (Chicago, 1963), 90.

can take this view of woman." Although this was unusual language for a Disciple spokesman, his closing observation touched upon a refrain more familiar to them. "It is a piece of cowardly injustice for men to claim to protect woman," he declared, "while withholding the ballot from them [sic], and at the same time, by law, establish in the community a saloon for the destruction of all that she holds dear."³ Among the Disciples of Christ, woman's campaign for temperance carried far more weight in the suffrage issue than the abstract concepts of sexual equality. Since they never considered the two sexes equal in their social roles or abilities, reasoning which demanded the vote as a human right was either ignored or considered dangerous to family stability.

Given the Disciple belief that all women should be pure, pious, domestic, and submissive, the suffrage cause could only be espoused on the grounds of expediency. To that end, a vital nexus existed between support or rejection of the woman's crusade against alcohol in 1874 and support or rejection of ballots for women. Until then, virtually all Disciples believed in "true womanhood" and condemned suffrage. After that year, faith in "true womanhood" remained unchallenged, but both advocates and opponents of women voting interpreted this image of womankind to their advantage.

³J. L. Parsons, "Should Christian Women Have the Ballot?" NCQ, V (October, 1896), 417-21.

In the decade before 1874, Disciple editors were almost unanimous in their opposition to women voting. Although the exception to this rule, even Marcia Goodwin refrained from turning her periodicals into pro-suffrage organs. She never wrote an editorial advocating suffrage for women, and the occasional articles in her papers favoring the cause were more than compensated for by those opposing it. Mrs. Frances D. Elliott typified the limited commitment to the equality of the sexes found in both the Christian Monitor and the American Housewife. "When you see any of us, married women, engaged in this Woman's Rights movement," she stated, "it is entirely for the benefit of our single sisters. . . . they need more rights, but our rights are concentrated in a right good husband."⁴

Church spokesmen condemned female suffrage as a threat to the home. Isaac Errett was particularly critical of those woman's rights "fanatics" who would drag a wife "from the home-altar [and] from her divinely appointed work."⁵ Other

⁴Mrs. Frances D. Elliott, "The Model Husband," AH, II (April, 1870), 51; ibid., CM, IX (April, 1870), 149. For other anti-suffrage articles in the American Housewife and the Christian Monitor, see: Silence H. Benson, "Encouragement for Housekeepers," AH, II (January, 1870), 2; Mrs. Frances D. Elliott, "What Can Woman Do?" CM, IX (August, 1870), 320; E. Katie Frazer, "What Manner of Women Ought We to Be?" ibid., X (July, 1871), 287-95; Lydia M. Millard, "Grandmother's Rights," ibid., XIV (September, 1875), 411.

⁵Isaac Errett, "Something about Women's Work," CS, I (October 13, 1866), 217.

Disciples echoed this editor.⁶ They agreed with the nameless sister who expressed "no sympathy" for "the woman who would leave the duties God has given her as wife and mother, to take upon herself the part man was to perform."⁷

At least two Disciples envisioned suffrage as leading mothers into military service. In 1874, D. G. Porter ridiculed the call for women voting by suggesting that first the female sex should be trained in "gymnastic discipline and military drill."⁸ Writing in the Gospel Echo, "Junia" was more direct, asserting that the right to vote mandated to a woman the "right to defend and fight for the laws of her country." Without the vote, she emphasized, woman "is now and always should be exempt" from the military.⁹

Christian Church authors associated woman's suffrage with free love and with the corresponding destruction of traditional family life. Isaac Errett was especially vocal on this point. In 1871, he reprinted an extract from a pamphlet protesting the inequality of contemporary marriage

⁶Editor, "1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35, and 1 Tim. ii, 11, 12," ACR, XV (February 27, 1872), 66; James A. Brooks, "Woman an Element in the Civilization of Time," C, XIII (July 22, 1875), 1; Mrs. C. E. Irelan, "Female Suffrage," CS, V (August 27, 1870), 273.

⁷Mother, "Maternal Responsibility," ACR, XIV (August 29, 1871), 274.

⁸D. G. Porter, "Republican Government and the Suffrage of Women," CQ, VI (October, 1874), 481.

⁹Junia, "Woman's Rights," GE, VII (March, 1869), 114.

customs. When its author proclaimed that "suffrage is sure to come, [and] the law of marriage is sure to go," he rebutted: "The advocates of woman suffrage had better be careful how they affiliate with this class of disorganizers, or they will find the whole movement repudiated by all virtue-loving people."¹⁰ Three years later he complained that the "extravagances of free love doctrines . . . too often dishonored women's conventions."¹¹ On the other hand, he lavished praise upon an Ohio suffragist who repudiated "the advocates of free-love."¹²

On those rare occasions when the Disciples took note of prominent suffrage leaders, their commentary was almost always negative. Errett's paper extracted an article by Elizabeth Cady Stanton which was critical of woman's dependence upon man. He followed it by reprinting an editorial from the Nation castigating her views.¹³ James A. Garfield, a Disciple preacher, congressman, and future President, contemptuously referred to another important suffragist as that "Venerable Virgin Susan B. Anthony." Later, he informed

¹⁰Isaac Errett, "Notes and Comments," CS, IV (January 7, 1871), 4.

¹¹Isaac Errett, "The Woman's Congress," ibid., IX (November 7, 1874), 356.

¹²Isaac Errett, "Ohio Suffrage Convention," ibid., VII (February 24, 1872), 64.

¹³"Injudicious Companions," ibid., III (February 15, 1868), 49.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton that "recent tendencies of the suffrage movement," had confirmed his belief that it would neither "elevate woman," nor "better her condition."¹⁴

Doubtless Garfield had in mind the notorious career of Victoria Woodhull. This controversial spiritualist embodied all that the Disciples considered evil in the suffrage cause. She and her sister, Tennessee Claflin, mixed their support of woman suffrage with cries for marriage reform, free love, and racial equality. Her exposure of Henry Ward Beecher's affair with Libby Tilton only increased her villainy in their eyes. Garfield piously noted in his diary his repugnance to Woodhull's tactics, and took comfort that she had "done her worst toward destroying the Woman's Right's Movement."¹⁵ In a similar vein G. T. Carpenter decried the "attempt to unsex woman, and to break up the family community" which was "led on by Victoria Woodhull and others."¹⁶ The same view was held by D. G. Porter, who saw in the immoral "position of the

¹⁴Garfield, Diary, January 10, 1872, in Brown and Williams, Diary of Garfield, II, 6; James A. Garfield to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 9, 1872, reprinted in ibid., 5-6.

¹⁵Garfield, Diary, October 30, 1872, ibid., 107-8. On October 30, Garfield, who was in Cincinnati, recorded in his diary: "looked over the most dreadful newspaper article I have ever seen. The pretended disclosures of Victoria Woodhull concerning Henry Ward Beecher, Theodore Tilton and wife, and some other persons." Evidently he did not have a copy of Woodhull's paper since its publication was not until November 2. Ibid.

¹⁶G. T. Carpenter, "A Plea for Our Girls," CM, XVI (December, 1877), 553.

Woodhull and Claflin party" a logical consequence of female voting. Assuming that suffrage would make man and woman equal in marriage, he reasoned that the headship of the husband would be rendered meaningless. In his mind, equality in the family union was synonymous with free love.¹⁷

Since the Disciples associated woman's suffrage with the destruction of the home, they adamantly opposed it prior to 1875. Appeals to justice and to the equality of the sexes had little effect upon a people who diligently desired to preserve sacred motherhood. Given this intellectual climate, Mrs. C. E. Ireland caustically dismissed the advocates of voting as "self-constituted mouth-pieces" of woman's suffrage, who were no more representative of "the women of our nation than an unsightly protuberance can represent a body." Then in the same breath, she took upon herself the mantle of a universal spokesman by averring: "I claim to speak the sentiment of millions when I say we do not want it."¹⁸

So long as the Disciples perceived of suffrage as violating the tenets of "true womanhood," they bitterly opposed it. However, the practical association of temperance with ballots for women encouraged them to re-evaluate their position. The expediency argument, by way of prohibition, could

¹⁷Porter, "Republican Government," 486-87.

¹⁸Mrs. C. E. Ireland, "Female Suffrage," CS, V (September 3, 1870), 281.

succeed for the very reasons that the rationale of justice failed. Among the Disciples, the concept of male-female equality not only carried with it the connotations of social instability and sexual looseness, but also the arguments tended to revolve around ideas and abstractions which had little meaning in their day to day life. Temperance was different. It was a simple moral issue on which all Christian Church spokesmen agreed. In their thinking, whiskey and its associated beverages were at the base of every social sin from alcoholism to prostitution to wife beating. Furthermore, womankind was the chief victim. Although the true woman refrained from strong drink, she was helpless as she endured the blows of a drunken husband, or watched her children starve while the father wasted the family budget, or cried without solace when her sons succumbed to the temptation of the saloon. Using such logic, Disciple ministers rejoiced when determined wives actively protested the sale of alcohol and in short order, preachers began calling for the right of mothers to vote their convictions.

Entitled the "woman's crusade" by its enthusiastic supporters, the campaign in 1874 by enraged wives and mothers against intemperance challenged not only the saloon, but also the middle class perception of woman's proper social decorum. From December, 1873, through the following spring and early summer, the country, and especially the Ohio River Valley, was rocked by female zealots emboldened with the spirit of

religious revivalism. In the small towns throughout western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, pious mothers gathered at local churches, marched to a chosen saloon, hotel, or drug store, and there engaged in a variety of non-violent protests against the sale of intoxicants. In an effort to close these despised establishments, women, who were inculcated with the spirit of "true womanhood," prayed before the saloon keeper, shamed his patrons, and employed against him the tactics of "religious blackmail."¹⁹ Ironically, many of the most adamant critics of the "strong-minded" woman's rights campaigners wholeheartedly endorsed the fanaticism of the "woman's crusade." Who, they asked, could deny these saintly mothers the right to protect their homes, their sons, and their husbands?

In the Ohio River Valley, the Disciples of Christ allied themselves with the Baptists, the Methodists, and the Presbyterians. Letters poured into their papers from the various hamlets of the region praising "the woman's crusade." Thomas D. Butler's blessing on the campaign in Jeffersonville, Indiana, exemplified the mixture of exuberance and sentimentality which Christian Church ministers felt toward the effort. He praised this labor by "Christian women . . . irrespective of denominational names" to abolish the saloon. In his community, indignant females confronted daily the

¹⁹John Kobler, Ardent Spirits: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition (New York, 1973), 114-30.

sellers of whiskey, assaulting them with prayers, songs, and petitions. Butler assisted their cause. Throughout each day the bell of the Christian Church rang out "at intervals of eight minutes" to remind sinners that with each doleful peal "a drunkard goes into eternity." To this minister, "the woman's crusade" constituted a moral campaign which no man could deny. As he looked upon these women, "their faces turned bravely to the clear sky . . . pleading for mercy . . . [from] the men who dealt out the poison" of alcohol, he asked himself, "Is there any shadow of a . . . doubt that these women are doing the Lord's work?"²⁰

Among the Disciple spokesmen, none promoted the "woman's crusade" with as much ebullience as Isaac Errett. From his vantage point in Cincinnati, he viewed the events of 1874 while surrounded by religious women urging the abolition of alcohol. On February 21, he exalted the "band of women" whose "prayerful efforts . . . brought a host of rumsellers . . . to abandonment of their evil ways." Giving his support to

²⁰Thomas D. Butler, "The Women's Temperance Movement," CS, IX (March 7, 1874), 74; Thomas D. Butler, "The Temperance Crusade," ibid. (April 11, 1874), 114. For other accounts of the crusade, see: Robert Graham, "The Great Temperance Movement," AT, V (February 26, 1874), 4; E. L. Frazier, "Woman's War on Whiskey," ibid., VI (April 16, 1874), 106; "Dr. Holland to Archbishop Purcell," ibid. (April 18, 1874), 123; J. A. Waters, "Temperance," ibid. (May 9, 1874), 146; Pardee Butler, "The Duty of Christians in Reference to Liquor Laws," ibid., (November 7, 1874), 353; A., "Temperance in Fairfield, Iowa," E, IX (April 9, 1874), 117; John Rogers, "The Crusade," ibid. (May 14, 1874), 154; J. M. W., "Nebraska Notes," ibid. (July 16, 1874), 226.

"this pious war against drunkenness," he urged his brethren to aid these women, who were "armed only with prayers and exhortations." On February 28, he paid tribute to "the zeal of the crusaders," complimenting their "beautiful reliance on God to help them." The following week, he found in the movement little "to condemn, and a great deal to approve." Thus the Christian Standard publisher implored: "Let every Christian woman help it. Let all good men give it countenance and protection. Let the church of Christ uphold it . . . as long as it is carried on in the Christ-like spirit." When a correspondent expressed hope that Errett would not falter in his advocacy of the crusade, he replied that the "Standard has uttered no uncertain sound on this question. We shall encourage the movement just as long and as far as it is in the right direction and in the right spirit."²¹ In the excitement of the spring's events, Errett shared the enthusiasm of the Christian Record's editor who proclaimed: "If anything in heaven, earth or hell will reach a whiskey-seller's conscience, it is the tears . . . of those mothers and widows whose sons and husbands have been murdered by the death-dealing traffic."²²

²¹Isaac Errett, "The New Temperance Movement," CS, IX (February 21, 1874), 60; Isaac Errett, "The Temperance Crusade," ibid. (February 28, 1874), 68; Isaac Errett, "The Temperance Crusade," ibid. (March 7, 1874), 76-77; Isaac Errett, "The Temperance Movement," ibid. (March 21, 1874), 92.

²²Benjamin F. Treet, "Temperance Crusade," CR, 5th sr., I (April, 1874), 146.

Such rhetoric was not universal among Disciple spokesmen. Those who lived on the geographic fringes of the temperance crusade took a more cautious view of the movement. In Lexington, Kentucky, John W. McGarvey voiced a profound ambivalence toward these activities. In April, he expressed his admiration for those heroic women who confronted the whiskey dealers and extracted repentance from them. But he added that he could not commend the crusade to his "sisters." McGarvey was uncomfortable with the lack of decorum in woman's street prayers. To him, prayer was a method used to gain God's intervention in the affairs of man. "When . . . employed as an instrumentality for overawing and subduing ungodly men who [were] not accustomed to its solemnities," he declared that it was "being diverted from the uses for which it was given." Despite his distaste for this utilization of prayer, McGarvey sympathized with the temperance goals. He did not feel "so confident in the correctness of [his] convictions" to justify "throwing unnecessary obstacles in the way of [the woman's] movement."²³

One week after McGarvey's article appeared in the Apostolic Times, the paper announced his election as secretary of Lexington's temperance alliance. Its first meeting

²³John W. McGarvey, "Our Duty in the Temperance Crusade," AT, VI (April 9, 1874), 5. For similar views, see "Woman's Temperance Crusade," ibid., V (March 26, 1874), 2; Z. "The Temperance Crusade," ibid., VI (April 23, 1874), 1; Emma F. Horine, "How Should Woman Fight Intemperance," ibid. (June 4, 1874), 3.

was held at the Main Street Christian Church and the following day a woman's auxiliary was organized.²⁴ McGarvey praised these "ladies," who did not possess "the least thought of a street-praying crusade."²⁵ As befitted their sex, the Lexington women attended weekly mass rallies where "all the speaking [was] done by men," and they daily passed petitions and pledges against the consumption of liquor.²⁶

Further to the south, the Gospel Advocate was at best lukewarm toward the crusade. Prior to 1874, David Lipscomb put into words his disdain for extra-church organizations. Although he despised alcohol, he affirmed that the Christian should work for moral reform only through the agency of the church. "God has made temperance a part of church obligation," he observed, "but where Christians pay most attention to worldly societies for temperance they pay least attention to it in the church."²⁷ In a later article, he proclaimed that Jehovah created the church in part to promote abstinence. "If man has invented an institution more efficacious

²⁴"Temperance Movement in Lexington," ibid. (April 16, 1874), 4.

²⁵John W. McGarvey, "Temperance Movement in Lexington," ibid. (April 23, 1874), 4.

²⁶"The Crusade in Lexington," ibid. (April 30, 1874), 4.

²⁷David Lipscomb, "The Family and Temperance Societies," GA, XIII (April 27, 1871), 391.

for effecting the end proposed, he is wiser than God."²⁸
 Having taken this position, the editor looked upon the woman's crusade with less than zeal.

In March, 1874, the Gospel Advocate reprinted a long article from a Methodist journal describing the anti-liquor movement. However, Elisha Sewell prefaced the piece with an extended disclaimer. The Nashville paper neither endorsed nor opposed the crusade. Although Sewell noted an extreme determination "on the part of the women," he possessed "little confidence in anything putting a permanent stop to [alcohol] but the religion of Jesus."²⁹ The following month, John T. Poe underscored the Gospel Advocate's opposition to temperance organizations. "The formation of any Society," he expounded, "is an express declaration that the church is inadequate to do the work, which the society proposes to do."³⁰ Virtually unmoved by the woman's crusade, Lipscomb's organ never felt compelled to support female suffrage.

²⁸David Lipscomb, "Temperance Societies," ibid., XV (August 21, 1873), 788.

²⁹Elisha Sewell, "Crusade of the Women Upon Whiskey Sellers," ibid., XVI (March 5, 1874), 219.

³⁰John T. Poe, "Temperance Societies," ibid. (April 30, 1874), 417. The Gospel Advocate never varied from this view. See John T. Poe, "Should Christians Join Temperance Societies?" ibid. (June 30, 1874), 612-13; David Lipscomb, "Queries," ibid., XVII (January 28, 1875), 118-19; David Lipscomb, "Christians and the Temperance Movement," ibid., XXIV (April 27, 1882), 260-62; John T. Poe, "Temperance," ibid., XXVIII (May 12, 1886), 300.

Despite the tepid attitude of the Nashville Disciples and the trepidations of their Lexington brethren, the churches of Ohio and Indiana gave the crusade their strongest endorsement. However, by early summer the excitement abated almost as rapidly as it had arisen. Nonetheless, this campaign by enraged wives and mothers left a changed environment. By gaining some small success against the distribution of liquor, these middle class women had tasted the intoxicating fruits of enlivened "true womanhood." Looking back with fondness upon the crusade, a prominent Christian Church educator recalled the "wild outburst of our sisters" against the curse of the "demon of intemperance." They had campaigned to save their husbands, "to brighten the nursery and sweeten the fireside." Although the initial "Temperance storm" was over, he believed woman's determination remained strong. "It has moral and religious principle in it," he proclaimed, and he admonished the church to "reach out its arm to help in this grand movement." He prayed loudly: "God help them to stand!"³¹

The woman's crusade against alcohol soon institutionalized itself through the creation of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) at Lake Chautauqua, New York, in November, 1874. Within a short time, this inter-denominational society called for woman's suffrage as an expedient in gaining the abolition

³¹W. K. Pendleton, "The Temperance Movement," CS, XII (May 5, 1877), 140.

of alcoholic beverages.³² As early as April, 1874, Isaac Errett saw the crusade moving toward suffrage, but registered his hope that the women would "refuse to identify themselves in any way with political movements."³³ He was soon reprimanded. A fervent Kansas minister noted that women were begging "the saloon keepers not to do the identical things which politicians" had authorized. "Light and darkness are not more antagonistic," he admonished, "than the prayers of these Christian women, and the legislation of the Christian Politicians."³⁴ Evidently Errett was persuaded. Five years later this editor endorsed the effort by the Illinois WCTU to have women vote in municipal referendums on prohibition. He stated: "We can not imagine any valid objection to the plea, and the movement is timely."³⁵

A few Disciples objected to mixing "the question of temperance reform with . . . woman's rights." One New York preacher doubted the wisdom of making "the cause of total abstinence . . . a tail to the woman suffrage

³²Anne Firor Scott has demonstrated the importance of the WCTU as a vehicle for women entering southern society in an active fashion. Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago, 1970), 147-50.

³³Isaac Errett, "Temperance Notes," CS, IX (April 4, 1874), 108.

³⁴Pardee Butler, "The Woman's Temperance Crusade and the Temperance Cause," ibid. (July 11, 1874), 218.

³⁵Isaac Errett, "Temperance Notes," ibid., XIV (January 4, 1879), 6.

kite."³⁶ Such an admonition of caution, however, was drowned out by the chorus of voices pleading for a mother's right to save her family. In 1878, a liberal evangelist complained that the woman's crusade failed because the female sex could pray, but could not vote. Give them that, he proclaimed, and "every dram-shop in the land would to-day be dried up."³⁷ The following year, A. C. Bartlett pointed to woman's instinctive desire to protect her children and asked why she was denied the ballot which would save her "dear ones [from] the drunkard's grave and . . . drunkard's hell?"³⁸ An Ohio Disciple stated that "if the women . . . were permitted to exercise the elective franchise . . . the sale of alcohol . . . would be forever abolished from our State."³⁹ James H. Garrison tempered his criticism of the "extreme champions of woman suffrage" by affirming "that in every community the wives and mothers should be legally consulted before saloons are licensed."⁴⁰ Many other Disciples echoed the conviction that aroused women must cast votes for the

³⁶B. B. Tyler, "Eastern Echoes," ibid., XX (May 2, 1885), 141.

³⁷John Boggs, "The Movement Against Intemperance," ibid., XIII (May 11, 1878), 149.

³⁸A. C. Bartlett, "Temperance," ibid., XIV (January 25, 1879), 26.

³⁹J. M. F. Foster, "Woman's Suffrage," ibid., XVII (April 22, 1882), 123.

⁴⁰James H. Garrison, "Woman's Rights," CE, XXIII (October 14, 1886), 643.

home.⁴¹ They sympathized with the unidentified sister who wrote in 1890 that "woman does not ask the ballot for happiness, but for the opportunity of fulfilling duties imposed by her Creator, of solving problems that affect the destiny of her children."⁴²

In this adoration of maternal-influenced politics, no Christian Church spokesman could match the anonymous writer who hid behind the pseudonym of "Harry Hotspur." His creedal statement favoring woman's suffrage combined Christian philosophy with patriotism, Victorian sentimentality, and mild eroticism!

I, for one, believe in the divine and eternal equality of both fatherhood and motherhood, in all the rights and privileges of both Church and State. I believe in it because I am a man and was of woman born. I believe in it because my infant lips drank at the pure white fountain of maternity's bosom. I believe in it because maternity's blessed fingers wrought and maternity's holy lips prayed for me, all the way up from my little cradle to the great, white step-stone at manhood's door. I believe in it because . . . another and later maternity and wifehood, lovingly clasped and wreathed my rugged manhood in the warm, blooming grace and glory of

⁴¹"Around the World," CS, XXIV (February 9, 1889), 81; George F. Hall, "Woman and the Ballot," ibid., XXXI (December 21, 1895), 1214; F. D. Powers, "Washington Letter," ibid. XXXII (February 8, 1896), 165; James H. Garrison, untitled editorial, CE, XXIII (July 8, 1884), 418; James C. Creel, "Notes from Richmond," ibid., XXIII (December 9, 1886), 777; H. W. B. Myrick, "Women and Authority," ibid., XXV (August 2, 1888), 469; Mrs. C. E. Evans, "Keepers at Home," ibid., 471; Julia M. Bosworth, "The Other Side," ibid. (August 30, 1888), 542.

⁴²A Woman, "The Other Side," ibid., XXVII (January 2, 1890), 14.

its clinging vines and flowers. I believe in it because I am an American and equal rights is the American's bread and meat. I believe in it because I am a Christian and Christ died for women as well as for men.⁴³

To argue against this rhetoric was to oppose the home and all that was sacred.

In this association of woman's suffrage with domestic protection, the Disciples found common cause with the WCTU. Both the Christian Standard and the Christian-Evangelist promoted its campaigns and opened their pages to WCTU writers. Charles L. Loos, president of Kentucky University, praised "this glorious Woman's Union" as "altogether Christian." He continued that "in it [woman was] leagued to God and Christ, [and] the Church and the Bible."⁴⁴ When asked what the attitude of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions should be toward the WCTU, Alice Williams replied: "I answer, without hesitation, heartfelt sympathy, active cooperation, and loyal support."⁴⁵ Evidence gleaned from the Disciple press suggests that the CWBM, as well as individual congregations, wholeheartedly aided the WCTU.⁴⁶ In the mind of these

⁴³Harry Hotspur, "Motherhood," ibid., XXIII (September 9, 1886), 565.

⁴⁴Charles L. Loos, "What Woman Is Doing," CS, XXIII (June 16, 1888), 373.

⁴⁵Alice Williams, "The Relation of the C. W. B. M. to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union," MT, XV (March, 1898), 276.

⁴⁶Articles about the WCTU and notices of their meetings in the Disciple papers are far too numerous to list. For

Disciples the entire issue of temperance and suffrage contained a simple moral equation. Persis L. Christian reasoned that a follower of Jesus was "either for the liquor traffic or against it."⁴⁷ Those opposed to woman's suffrage fell into the camp of rum sellers.

Having appropriated the home argument, proponents of female voting denied to anti-suffragists a potent weapon. Only rarely were conservative Disciples able to use the rationale of "true womanhood" against the WCTU or against woman's suffrage. Nonetheless, they occasionally attempted to do so by defaming the reputation of Francis Willard, president of the WCTU.

Liberal Disciples praised the WCTU leader. After listening "to the glowing earnestness of Miss Francis Willard," Persis Christian declared: "I revere her and her work, and that of other good women, who . . . have trailed their pure

indications of the close relationship between Christian Church organizations and the WCTU, see Martin L. Streator, "The Scriptural Status of Woman," CE, XXXI (September 5, 1895), 566; Fannie H. Christopher, "W.C.T.U.," CS, XVII (March 25, 1882), 93; "Benevolent and Religious Movements," ibid. (June 3, 1882), 172; Sarah A. R. Boor, "Woman's Work," ibid., XVIII (October 20, 1883), 402; F. D. Powers, "Washington Letter," ibid., XXV (December 6, 1890), 831; Jessie H. Brown, "Woman in Philanthropy," ibid., XXIX (June 17, 1893), 474; W. J. Wright, "From the National Capital," ibid., XXXVI (December 15, 1900), 1600; "C. W. B. M. and W. C. T. U.," MT, IX (January, 1892), 2-3; Mrs. Sarah B. Stotts, "What Shall be the Attitude of the Christian Woman Towards These Two Great Movements?" ibid., XIV (February, 1897), 273.

⁴⁷Persis L. Christian, "Christian Missions and the Liquor Traffic," CS, XXII (September 17, 1887), 304.

skirts through . . . dirt and filth" for the temperance cause.⁴⁸ With equal enthusiasm, James H. Garrison lauded the "noble women who are leaders in this temperance cause, and who plead for the ballot to enable them to protect their homes." Calling WCTU members "pre-eminently home women," he suggested: "Ask Miss Willard if she believes there is any nobler sphere for woman's influence than the home."⁴⁹ Garrison's editorial played into the hands of anti-suffrage Disciples.

E. W. Herndon, editor of the Christian Quarterly Review and a close friend of David Lipscomb, attacked Garrison's observations. How, he wondered, could such women as Francis Willard demonstrate the values of home, when they traveled about the nation "unsexing themselves by . . . appearing on the lecture" platform before mixed audiences? "If Miss Willard has such a high opinion of woman in the home," he asked, then "why is she not in a home instead of going up and down all over the country, assuming the role of a platform teacher of man?" Herndon then moralized that voting women violated the scriptural principle of wives submitting to their husbands. Building upon that logic, he could not "understand how a man can be loyal to God's word while

⁴⁸Persis L. Christian, "Temperance Movement," ibid., XVII (November 25, 1882), 375.

⁴⁹James H. Garrison, editorial reply to J. G. Chinn, "About Female Suffrage and Office Holding," CE, XXV (July 21, 1888), 421.

advocating Woman's Suffrage."⁵⁰ Lipscomb agreed. "It is probable God overrules Miss Willard's course to bring some good out of it to humanity," he reasoned, "But I have no more doubt that her course is hurtful to humanity and dishonoring to God than I have that the Bible is from God."⁵¹

Since Lipscomb, and those Disciples influenced by him, never associated themselves with the woman's crusade for temperance, they remained free to use the concept of true womanhood against suffrage. E. W. Herndon was so opposed to females voting that he stated with emphasis: "If the saloon can not be destroyed except by Woman's Suffrage, we say, let the saloon stay." Like most Disciples, he was opposed to alcoholic consumption; he simply assumed that sexual equality was the greater threat to the family. Should "wives differ from their husbands" in politics, he deduced that "domestic harmony would be destroyed, the home would cease to be what it should be, and its influence would be gone."⁵²

Without fail, the Gospel Advocate identified suffrage with the extremes of feminism. In 1884, Elisha Sewell warned that "Woman's Rights" and voting contained "a principle which, if allowed to spread, threatens to destroy the most sacred

⁵⁰E. W. Herndon, "Woman's Suffrage," CQR, VII (October, 1888), 608.

⁵¹David Lipscomb, "Women in the Church," GA, XXX (November 21, 1888), 6.

⁵²Herndon, "Woman's Suffrage," 607.

of all institutions, and make of America a homeless nation." He castigated those "strong-minded women" who would "break the 'bond of subjection' divinely laid upon them and assert their independence; vote, hold office, electioneer, and, if necessary, fight their way to the ballot box."⁵³ Lipscomb expressed similar misgivings. He ridiculed one sister's belief that "if women voted, there would be no licensed saloons, nor gambling houses, nor whore houses." In his thinking, these sins could be eradicated only by making girls into better mothers and not by giving them the vote.⁵⁴

To these conservative Disciples, crusading mothers were self-defeating. In 1892, J. W. Sewell lamented the nation's rising tide of juvenile delinquency. He was especially concerned that so many young men frequented establishments catering to drinking, prostitution, and gambling. "Strange to say," he mused, "the mothers of such boys are the women most often found in the front ranks of the W. C. T. U., and the C. W. B. M., and like organizations." Since these mothers had abandoned the true woman's sphere, they could only "weep and grieve over" their lost sons.⁵⁵

Other voices drowned out the Gospel Advocate's warnings.

⁵³Elisha G. Sewell, "Woman and Politics," GA, XXVI (October 22, 1884), 674.

⁵⁴Lipscomb, "Women in the Church," 6.

⁵⁵J. W. Sewell, "Infidelity in Young Men," GA, XXXIV (February 18, 1892), 103.

As a leading church supporter of woman's suffrage, Persis L. Christian urged the Disciples to subscribe to "all questions of ethics and reform." Envisioning temperance as the key to a sin-free society, she believed women voters would provide not only "greater volume, but greater purity, greater moral power" for reshaping the nation.⁵⁶ Liberal churchmen, who approved the work of the CWBM and the WCTU, who sanctioned female preaching, and who knew well the moral power of aroused motherhood, sympathized with this logic. "True womanhood," made active through suffrage, was an expediency to gain a virtuous millennium.

The life and suffrage career of Zerelda Wallace (1817-1901) illustrated the Disciple rationale for women voting. The daughter of a Kentucky physician, who tutored her in science, politics, and religion, she early developed a strong intellectual curiosity. At the age of 14, she was baptized into the Christian Church and at 19, she married David Wallace, a widower and Indiana's lieutenant-governor. One year later, Wallace ascended to the governor's office, making his wife the youngest first lady in the state's history. In addition to the six children born to David and Zerelda Wallace, she inherited three boys from her husband's first union. The second of these, Lew Wallace, a future Civil War general,

⁵⁶Persis L. Christian, "Twelfth Annual Convention of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions," MT, IV (December, 1886), 5.

political figure, and author of Ben Hur, was devoted to his step-mother.⁵⁷ At war's end, he expressed his admiration for Zerelda by admonishing his half-sister: "study mother well; make yourself as much like her as you can; take to yourself all her virtues and excellencies; only Aggie, don't catch her--handwriting. . . . it would have ruined Mother if anything earthly could."⁵⁸ Zerelda's admirers believed that Lew Wallace used her as the model for the mother figure in his famous novel.⁵⁹

Prior to the woman's crusade for temperance, Zerelda Wallace was content to raise three generations of children: her step-sons, her own children, and later several grandchildren. Up until this time, she had been a gracious hostess to notable political and religious figures, but she had demonstrated no interest in leaving the domestic realm. In 1874, however, she was instrumental in the beginning of two important woman's movements: the Christian Woman's Board of Missions and the Women's Christian Temperance

⁵⁷Clipping from the Indianapolis Sunday Star, April 26, 1964, in Zerelda Wallace folder, Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

⁵⁸Lew Wallace to My dear Sister, November 7, 1865, Wallace Family Papers, Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

⁵⁹Nashville Banner, November 15, 1887; Nashville Daily American, November 18, 1887; Francis E. Willard, Woman and Temperance (Hartford, Connecticut, 1888), 485; Mrs. Frances D. Elliott, "Zerelda Wallace," CE, XXXVIII (April 18, 1901), 494.

Union.⁶⁰ As one of the more respected members of the Central Christian Church in Indianapolis, she helped organize its woman's missionary society. In July, 1874, Marcia Goodwin and others met at her home and there planned the future CWBM. For years after that, Zerelda Wallace served on the society's executive board, and its meetings were usually held in her parlor.⁶¹

Important in the development of the CWBM, she played an even more prominent role in the WCTU. As the woman's crusade swept across Indiana, she became involved. Although Zerelda Wallace had never made a public speech prior to 1874, at the age of 57 she lent her influential voice to the temperance movement. In November, this former first lady of Indiana played an important part in the initial WCTU convention and shortly thereafter founded Indiana's state chapter. For seven of the next nine years, she was its president.⁶²

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Mrs. P. J. Jameson, "Mrs. Zerelda Wallace," CS, XXXVII (April 27, 1901), 547; minutes of the executive board of the CWBM, 1875-1878 passim., typescripts, CWBM Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society; Mrs. Cordie B. Knowles, "Christian Woman's Board of Missions," in Report of the International Council of Women Assembled by the National Woman's Suffrage Association . . . March 25 to April 1, 1888 (Washington, D. C., 1888), 459.

⁶²The National Woman's Temperance Convention (Cleveland, Ohio, 1874), 12, 28, 35, 38; Mary Earnhart, Francis Willard: From Prayers to Politics (Chicago, 1944), 147; Fifty-fourth Annual Meeting of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of the State of Indiana (Princeton, Indiana, 1927), n.p.; Willard, Women and Temperance, 476-79.

At first Zerelda Wallace believed that woman's special moral power was sufficient to persuade legislators to abolish the liquor traffic. She was soon disillusioned. On January 21, 1875, she presented to the Indiana legislature a petition containing 21,050 names of "women over eighteen years of age." Then she addressed a joint assembly of the state senate and house of representatives. Beginning by dissociating herself from "fanatics, agitators of reform . . . women who would leave the sacred and beloved precincts of home to enter the arena of political strife," she begged the law makers to institute prohibition.⁶³ Her appeal was fruitless. One senator pointed out that the women by virtue of their sex were not constituents and that the legislators were responsible to the wishes of voters. The widow of David Wallace had come face to face with political reality. According to Francis Willard, a close personal friend, Zerelda Wallace soon thanked the senator explaining: "You are against our cause, but I am still grateful to you, because you have made me a woman-suffragist."⁶⁴ At the WCTU's second annual con-

⁶³The Indianapolis Journal, January 22, 1875; Samuel Hooper to wife, January 24, 1875, Wallace Family Papers; "Mrs. Wallace's Address to the Indiana Legislature," C, XIII (March 25, 1875), 3. During this effort to lobby the state legislature, the WCTU's headquarters was in the Central Christian Church's building. Indianapolis Journal, January 25, 1875.

⁶⁴Willard, Women and Temperance, 482-84. A slight variation of this incident appeared in Sarah E. Franklin, "Still They Come," CS, XIX (March 29, 1884), 98.

vention, Zerelda Wallace pushed through its first suffrage resolution and for years thereafter she headed the society's "department of franchise." During the next decade and a half, she toured the country promoting the twin causes of temperance and the enfranchisement of women. In 1887, she traveled to nine states, making 125 speeches.⁶⁵ Throughout this period, her career was followed with favor by both the Christian Standard and the Christian-Evangelist.⁶⁶

Wallace's speeches and reports repeated the theme that virtuous mothers needed the suffrage to protect their sons from the evils of alcohol. One of her best addresses was given before the WCTU's national convention, which met in Nashville in 1887. Emphasizing that the "moral forces of the race are in the hands of woman," she expounded upon the attributes of her sex's maternal propensities. To her, "women [were] born governors by virtue of their motherhood." When an objector pointed out that women who did not serve in the military should not vote, she replied: "A woman who goes

⁶⁵Earnhart, Francis Willard, 161, 194-96, 203; Francis Willard, Glimpses of Fifty Years: The Autobiography of an American Woman (Chicago, 1889), 352; Minutes of the Second Annual Convention of the National Woman's Temperance Union Held in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 17, 18, 19, 1875 (Chicago, 1889), 60-61; Minutes of the National Woman's Christian Union . . . in Nashville, Tenn., November 16 to 21, 1887 (Chicago, 1888), xx.

⁶⁶For examples see "Christian Woman's Board of Missions," C, XVIII (October 27, 1881), 4; Zerelda Wallace, "Mass. State Temperance Convention," CS, X (May 22, 1875), 164; Zerelda Wallace, "Congressional Memorial," ibid. (September 11, 1875),

down into the valley of the shadow of death every two years . . . that she may furnish soldiers for the state, certainly does as much for the defense of the state as does the father who buys bread and shoes for the children." She then employed the rhetoric of "true womanhood" to express her philosophy:

You intrust your dearest interests to woman--you confine to her keeping your honor, your children, the sacred interests of your home, why fear to trust her with the ballot by which she can serve and defend all these interests? You call her the queen of the home, and so she is; but without the ballot she is an uncrowned queen, and her sceptre but a broken reed.⁶⁷

Significantly, the Christian Standard devoted two articles to praising "Mother" Wallace and the WCTU convention, while the Gospel Advocate, published in Nashville, devoted a mere four lines to the convention and never mentioned their Disciple sister.⁶⁸

For Zerelda Wallace and for a majority of the Christian Church leadership, female suffrage was a positive good. In

290; Mary A. Woodbridge, "Women's N. C. Temperance Union," ibid., XV (November 27, 1880), 378; Zerelda Wallace, "Render to Caesar the Things that Are Caesar's," ibid., XIX (February 2, 1884), 34; W. K. P., "Chicago Clippings," CE, XXVI (December 5, 1889), 775; Jennie G. Hedges, "Talitha Cumi," ibid., XXVIII (July 23, 1891), 468-69; N. S. H., "Chicago Column," ibid., XXX (June 1, 1893), 344; "Christian Woman's Board of Missions," CM, XX (November, 1881), 505.

⁶⁷"Fourteenth Annual Convention of the National W. C. T. U.," The Union Signal, XIII (December 1, 1887), 22.

⁶⁸R. M. Giddings, "W. C. T. U. National Convention," CS, XXII (December 24, 1887), 441; R. M. Giddings, "The National W. C. T. U.," ibid., XXIII (January 7, 1888), 11; "General News," GA, XXIX (November 23, 1887), 746.

accepting the need for temperance and other moral reform, the Disciples expanded the logic of "true womanhood" to justify active mothers voting their convictions. On the other hand, David Lipscomb, the writers of the Gospel Advocate, and their associates also relied upon the cult of "true womanhood." In their collective thought, the virtuous woman remained passively in her divinely appointed realms of the home and the church. No amount of moral indignation excused her from leaving those institutions.

Almost all Disciples rejected the logic of equal rights based upon justice. Appeals to sexual equality had little impact upon these people who saw woman within the stereotypes of wife, mother, and sister. Nonetheless, by the 1890's these intensely religious individuals recognized that woman's status had evolved into a different form. Their editorials and letters began to take note of something called the "new woman."

CHAPTER VII

DISCIPLE WOMEN IN PERSPECTIVE

The cult of true womanhood, which Barbara Welter identified as developing between 1820 and 1860, continued to influence the status of American women at least until century's end. It matured within the context of a middle class society nervously adjusting its social thinking to the constantly evolving environment which was the result of urbanization and industrialization. As early as the 1830's social critics were alarmed by the rise of the city. Their husbands moved out from the family to engage in business and politics, leaving to their wives the job of perpetuating traditional values within what society considered woman's natural domain--the home and the church.¹ After the Civil War, the forces of change accelerated as the United States rapidly developed into a modern industrial state. The historian Samuel Hays has suggested that "Americans drew back in disgust before the crudeness of the new age and the graft, corruption, praise of material values, and destruction of resources that accompanied it." He then hypothesized that religious leaders and organized women's groups worked together to preserve past values against the encroachments of the factory

¹Welter, "Cult of True Womanhood," 151-52.

system.² Such an alliance did develop within segments of the Disciples of Christ. From 1865 to 1900, liberal and conservative ministers of the Christian Church looked to the idealized true woman as a refuge in a time of social unrest. Woman, wrote one Disciple preacher, "is the gravitating force that holds society above the gulf of moral corruption."³

This desire to preserve tradition explains why the feminist campaign for sexual equality had little impact upon Disciple women. Middle class Americans of the nineteenth century refused to embrace reform so long as it was promoted by perceived radicals.⁴ Feminism frightened Disciple leaders, who saw in it the destruction of both the home and the church. "Feminine parsons, lawyers, and politicians may become common and popular," complained one conservative evangelist, but he believed they clearly violated God's "natural law." Like many of his brethren, he affirmed that those women, who desired to work for Christ, could "do it a thousand times more effectually by training children in the faith and hope

²Samuel P. Hays, The Response to Industrialization, 1885-1914 (Chicago, 1957), 24, 72-73.

³F. W. Smith, "A Sermon to Women," GA, XXXI (April 10, 1889), 232.

⁴Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York, 1955), 165. Discussing attitudes toward woman prior to 1860, Welter noted that advocates of true womanhood assumed that feminists "were tampering with society, undermining civilization. Mary Wollstonecraft, Francis Wright and Harriet Martineau were condemned in the strongest possible language--they were read out of the sex." Welter, "Cult of True Womanhood," 172-73.

and discipline of the gospel."⁵ In a similar vein, a professor from Lexington's College of the Bible admonished that in "these days of woman's rights," a young man would be well advised to seek a "true wife" who would give to him "a love as sweet and lasting as a mother's love."⁶ The Disciples tended to identify all feminists with the most radical members of the movement. Thus when Victoria Woodhull revealed Henry Ward Beecher's affair with the wife of Theodore Tilton, this church's leaders immediately linked them to the feminist cause. "Doubtless there are thousands of well-meaning ladies in the woman's rights movement," wrote one minister, "who conscientiously deny that it has any affinity with licentiousness. It may tend, perhaps, to correct this error when they observe . . . three . . . exponents of the woman's rights movement cowering together under the burden of a common shame."⁷ In the thought of Disciples of Christ spokesmen only "true wives" and mothers could provide the security of the home against the infringements of a modern hostile world. At the same time, they looked upon the feminist campaign for sexual equality as contributing to society's disorder.

Despite this romanticization of womanhood as the

⁵L. F. Bittle, untitled editorial, OR, XXXI (December 20, 1888), 5.

⁶Robert T. Mathews, "A Parents' and Children's Service," CE, XXV (June 7, 1888), 341.

⁷V. B. Denslow, "Plymouth's Peculiar Pastor," AT, VI (July 16, 1874), 8.

repository of virtue and tradition, both ecumenical and evangelistic Disciples believed that man was the prime mover in the larger affairs of life. In 1893, a highly conservative minister, Olsen Norrisch, sermonized that man, not woman, "was given dominion of the world. . . . Adam was first formed, then Eve. She was created for him, and not he for her; and while man is the image and glory of God, woman is the image and glory of man."⁸ This condescending attitude was shared by his liberal brethren. Little wonder that George F. Hall, a member of the church's ecumenical wing, observed: "Without meaning any disrespect whatever to the gentler sex, I am profoundly thankful that I was not born to wear petticoats. I would rather be a man than anything else in the universe, angels not accepted."⁹ Representing the extremes of Disciple theology, Norrisch and Hall essentially agreed in their perception of woman's relationship to man. They envisioned her status as emanating from her association with a male relative.

Given the support of true womanhood by both liberal and conservative Disciples, by 1900 they were strangely divided as to what a true woman could and could not do in society. Both identified woman's proper sphere as the home and the church. Nonetheless, theological liberals accepted women preachers, women voters, and women engaged in social reform,

⁸Olsen Norrisch, "Woman's Relation in Life, and 'Work' in the Church," GA, XXXV (February 16, 1893), 102.

⁹George F. Hall, Personal Purity, 10.

while their conservative associates consistently denied that the female sex should perform these activities. Their different interpretations of true womanhood suggest an answer to this paradox.

Welter identified the cardinal virtues of the cult of true womanhood as purity, piety, domesticity, and submissiveness.¹⁰ As envisioned by mid-century Americans the true woman was to remain passively in the home. But as the century progressed, many women found it increasingly difficult to remain in a state of inertia when faced with what they considered external threats to their domestic felicity. Like most middle class citizens, the Disciples affirmed that woman was given a free hand to regulate the home and to make it a haven from the world's cares for the husband and a sanctuary preparing children for a larger society. This concept of woman as a domestic regulator suggested two divergent approaches to her proper function. Evangelistic churchmen assumed that true women must remain pure from the evils of the extra-home world. Thus only by passively ignoring the corruption of the environment beyond their domestic circle could they preserve the sanctity of both their own souls and the households they sought to maintain. By contrast, ecumenical Disciples believed that woman's purity was less fragile. They averred that as the protector of home virtues women

¹⁰Welter, "Cult of True Womanhood," 152.

should actively move into the wider realms of society in order to safeguard their domestic kingdoms from external evils.

This debate over woman as a domestic regulator can be further explained by elaborating on an observation made by the historian Christopher Lasch in 1965. He noted the irony that in spite of the opposition by feminists "to the enslavement of women in the home," in the nineteenth century they employed "the very cliches which had so long been used to keep her there." Since both feminists and anti-feminists assumed that woman was more moral than man and more given to altruism and self-sacrifice, Lasch concluded that "feminist and anti-feminist assumptions seemed curiously to coincide."¹¹ If it is accepted that the evolution of woman's status was more than a simple argument over the merits of feminism, then his remarks help explain the Disciple attitude toward woman's social role. Within the Christian Church periodicals, the curious similarity of domestic rhetoric applied not to feminism versus anti-feminism, but rather to the dialogue over whether the true woman ought to remain passively in the home or should engage actively in reform to protect her natural domain.

Although all Disciples accepted the concept that woman's

¹¹Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type (New York, 1965), 53-4.

place was in the home, the arguments concerning the active or passive nature of "true womanhood" separated this religious communion into two distinct camps. Their debate over woman's suffrage illustrated these divergent attitudes.

In 1870, Mrs. C. E. Irelan spoke for most members of her church when she wrote an anti-suffrage letter to the Christian Standard. Stating that the "nation is but a family of families," she then asked: "if the head of the wife is the man, then is the man the head of the nation?" After answering in the affirmative, Mrs. Irelan assured her readers that woman was to remain quietly in the home, leaving politics to her husband.¹² Within the next two decades, however, Disciple leaders would cease to be unified on this question.

Woman's role in the crusade for temperance and similar moral campaigns demonstrated a commitment to a virtuous society was not always compatible with the passive nature of "true womanhood." By 1888, H. W. B. Myrick, an ecumenical Disciple, observed that within the family, the church, and the state woman was to remain submissive, but he also assumed that woman could vote. The state was a

big family [where woman] may not be a president, a governor, a supreme judge, as these involve authority. But, as in the family and the church, she has the right, the God-given right to elect just who shall be her authority, and to whom, as president, judge, or legislator, she will be in subjection.

¹²Mrs. C. E. Irelan, "Female Suffrage," CS, V (August 27, 1870), 273.

This Disciple left no doubt as to the moral value of female suffrage by proclaiming: "Let the women vote. Stand by the Prohibition platform."¹³ Among those who supported the ecumenical branch of the church's schism, the concept of woman as the domestic regulator justified her actively protecting her home domain against the encroachments of a disorderly world.

Evangelistic Disciples were far less certain that women should play a significant role beyond the home circle. Writing in 1884, Elisha Sewell, co-editor of the Gospel Advocate, expressed fear that female suffrage would bring an end to domestic tranquility. He informed his sisters that "every instinct of humanity points to home as [woman's] realm," and that her one duty in life was "to keep it pure from all contaminating influences," to make it "a place in which fathers, husbands, sons and brothers [could] find rest after toil."¹⁴ In the relatively short time span from the missive of Mrs. Ireland to the writings of Myrick and Sewell, Christian Church attitudes toward woman's role had modified significantly. By the 1880's both evangelistic and ecumenical Disciples were using the rhetoric of "true womanhood," but from it they reached different conclusions as to the rights that the female sex could exercise.

¹³H. W. B. Myrick, "Women and Authority," CE, XXV (August 2, 1888), 469.

¹⁴Elisha G. Sewell, "Woman and Politics," GA, XXVI (October 22, 1884), 674.

Explanations for why the Disciples developed this dissonant attitude toward "true womanhood" can be found within the context of their schism. From 1865 to 1900, ecumenical churchmen softened their dogma and gradually accommodated their beliefs to the general trend in American Protestant religion to give women a more active role in the church polity.¹⁵ Their evangelistic brethren retained a theology underscored by biblical legalism. Given the conservative's literal interpretation of New Testament scriptures, especially the Pauline commandments of woman's silence, they were less willing to appease feminine demands for a larger church role. Although historians of the Disciple movement have offered a number of interpretations for the church's split, Bill J. Humble's analysis of the division as it related to their missionary society controversy prior to 1875 most closely parallels this study on woman's status in the Christian Church. Humble suggested that within the movement there "were many threads of alienation which were woven together before the tapestry of division was complete." But, he noted that if the historian analyzed the "finished tapestry," he would "distinguish three threads which the loom of history had to have before the weaving could be complete." The three threads were: an antagonistic interpretation of Alexander Campbell's

¹⁵Welter, "Feminization of Religion," 306-7, 309, 330; Douglas, Feminization of Culture, 41-43, 48-50, 74-75, 97-98, 115.

call for the restoration of the New Testament Church; sectional conflicts resulting from the Civil War; and socio-economic factors.¹⁶ Although confusing threads appeared frequently within individual Disciples, taken as a whole these traits explain both the theological division of the church and its divided attitudes toward the social status of the female sex.

Differing interpretations of Alexander Campbell's restoration plea was the primary thread leading to the Disciple schism. Church conservatives looked upon the New Testament as the inviolable will of Christ from which the basic practices of the first century church had to be reproduced in the modern era. Out of this they made into tests of fellowship the profession of Christ as savior, adult immersion, and the weekly observance of the Lord's supper. In addition, they rejected the use of mechanical music in worship and the development of extra-congregational missionary societies. Convinced of the rightness of their cause, the conservatives gladly separated themselves from the mainstream of American Protestant denominationalism.

As the church's majority softened its theology, it disavowed such legalistic tendencies. Seeking both greater acceptance by the major denominations and hoping to promote Christian unity, liberal representatives gave to the term

¹⁶Humble, "Missionary Society Controversy," 330-40.

"restorationism" a more abstract meaning. They advocated restoring the "spirit" of the first century church rather than its original polity. This philosophy was best articulated by James H. Garrison who in 1895 published a treatise entitled "The Transient and Permanent Elements in the Campbell Reformation." He indicated that when Alexander Campbell and other early Disciple leaders used "their banner . . . word 'Restoration,' they never proposed to restore primitive Christianity" with all "of its incidental features which were only local or temporary." Instead, he believed that the most fundamental characteristic of the "church of Christ" was its ability to evolve to meet new social conditions. Garrison therefore assumed that from its beginning Christianity "had associated with it . . . certain elements that were never to be permanent" and accordingly "such a religious reformation as [his] should be attended with transient or temporary features."¹⁷ Once ecumenical Disciples accepted Garrison's basic assumptions, the movement was no longer required to give a literal interpretation to New Testament passages.

This essential divergence in theological premises influenced greatly the Disciple attitude toward woman's role. Evangelistic churchmen accepted as binding in the nineteenth century the Pauline commandments of silence among first cen-

¹⁷James H. Garrison, "The Transient and Permanent Elements in the Campbell Reformation," NCQ, IV (July, 1895), 72-3.

tury women. David Lipscomb, in common with other conservatives, believed that the injunction of silence applied to public preaching. When confronted with the examples of Priscilla and other first century women who taught, he envisioned a passive ministry for his sisters. Lipscomb explained that "women must teach their own children; must visit the sick, the afflicted, the needy, and, in these quiet ministrations, teach the word of truth." He also affirmed that wives could privately instruct their husbands and other men as individuals, and certainly Christian mothers ought "to teach those misguided women, who refused to bear children."¹⁸ To the Gospel Advocate editor, a literal interpretation of the New Testament forbade "woman doing anything immodest, unwomanly or . . . calculated to throw her out of the place God has appointed her" (the home).¹⁹

Since by the 1890's ecumenical Disciples were invoking a less stringent interpretation of the New Testament, they were little troubled by any apparent contradictions between woman's public ministry in the nineteenth century and Pauline doctrine. George T. Smith, a former missionary to Japan, typified this position. Advocating female ordination, he contended that the "New Testament is a book of principles, not

¹⁸David Lipscomb, "Woman's Work," GA, XXXIV (December 1, 1892), 756-57.

¹⁹David Lipscomb, "Woman's Work," ibid., XVI (March 26, 1874), 305.

of petty rules." Thus the Apostle Paul's command of silence applied only to the first century when women were degraded by Greek traditions, and not to the nineteenth century where woman's teachings were edifying to society. "The Lord," Smith warned, "gave [woman] a talent for public speaking," and "whoever hinders her use of it opposes God."²⁰

The theological disputation between liberal and conservative churchmen fails fully to account for the Disciple attitudes toward woman's social role. Some notable church leaders developed attitudes inconsistent with their position in the movement's schism. John W. McGarvey and John B. Briney, both of whom supported the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, interpreted as literal Paul's command that women be silent in the churches. On the other hand, J. D. Tant, one of the most dogmatic of conservatives, advocated woman's right to preach. Using as his guide the equality of males and females in Galatians 3:28, he concluded "that women, (when they don't try to usurp authority over the man), have the same right to preach, sing, pray and baptize that the man has in the church of God."²¹ Apparently factors in addition to theology dictated the views of the Disciples toward the status of women.

²⁰George T. Smith, "'Let the Women Keep Silence in the Churches,'" CE, XXX (May 4, 1893), 279; George T. Smith, "Condition of Women in Paul's Day," CS, XXIX (December 2, 1893), 958.

²¹J. D. Tant, "Women Preaching," FF, VI (December 25, 1890), 3.

Sectional problems developing out of the Civil War formed the second thread adding to the church's schism and to its leader's attitudes about woman's place.²² The religious census of 1906 revealed that the ecumenical-minded Christian Church was strongest in the northern and border states while about two-thirds of the membership of the conservative Churches of Christ lived in the former Confederacy. Those brethren who fought on opposite sides of the Civil War found it difficult to associate with one another after peace was restored. Southern Disciples were especially dismayed that the church's northern-dominated missionary society had supported the Union cause. This in effect added a sectional element to the church's division.

Significantly, those Christian Church representatives who most strongly supported active, crusading women, were both northern-based and pro-missionary society. Among them Isaac Errett, James H. Garrison, Marcia Goodwin, Charles Loos, and Persis L. Christian played important roles in creating and promoting the Christian Woman's Board of Missions.

²²The sectional influences upon the Disciples of Christ schism have been explored at length by David E. Harrell, Jr., "The Disciples of Christ and Social Force in Tennessee, 1865-1900," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 38 (1966), 30-47; ibid., "The Sectional Origins of the Churches of Christ," Journal of Southern History, XXX (August, 1964), 261-77; ibid., "The Sectional Pattern: The Divisive Impact of Slavery on the Disciples of Christ," Discipliana, XXI (March, 1961), 26-28; ibid., "Sin and Sectionalism: A Case Study of Morality in the Nineteenth Century South," Mississippi Quarterly, XIX (Fall, 1966), 157-70.

Through the agency of the CWBM, Disciple women left the confines of the home to engage in the larger sphere of religious and social reform. In 1892, Persis Christian proclaimed that "the greatest work . . . accomplished by the C. W. B. M." was the "intellectual awakening of thousands of women," thus providing for them "a period of growth and activity which [had] transformed their lives and increased their usefulness."²³ A few years earlier, she told a CWBM convention that home women, working through the missionary society, had "become more independent in thought, more self-reliant, larger minded, more generous in spirit, more catholic in sympathy, more independent in action."²⁴ Persis Christian and the northern members of her religious communion welcomed the active potential contained in the cult of true womanhood.

Offended because the church's missionary society supported the Union cause, after the Civil War most southern Disciples rejected both the general missionary society and the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. Lacking the model of modest women engaged in extra-domestic reform activities, conservatives failed to accept an active interpretation of "true womanhood." Elisha Sewell continually reminded the readers of the Gospel Advocate that woman's "place to work

²³Persis L. Christian, "Of Interest to Women," CS, XXVIII (February 13, 1892), 152.

²⁴Persis L. Christian, "Twelfth Annual Convention of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions," MT, IV (December, 1886), 5.

[was] at home, with her husband and children, and such other private circles as belong to her capacity and mission."²⁵ He shared with his close associate, David Lipscomb, the belief that women reformers led to domestic instability. Lipscomb professed to find the origins of society's disorder in "New England and the North [which were] tenfold more given to irreligion and infidelity than the South." He assumed that the people of the North cared little for marriage stability which in turn fostered in women an unnatural "thirst for the publicity and applause of the rostrum," and also caused them to develop a disinclination to "bear children and guide the house." The editor hinted darkly that in New England "foeticide [was] said to be common."²⁶

The sectional division of the Disciples of Christ should not be overemphasized. In the South, membership in the ecumenical Christian Church almost equaled that of their evangelistic counterparts and the 1906 religious census revealed that almost one-third of the Churches of Christ's strength existed in the North. Some southern Disciples advocated more active roles for their female members. J. N. Clem, the church's Arkansas state evangelist, strongly promoted female ordination and the Firm Foundation in Texas reported that the

²⁵Elisha G. Sewell, "Queries," GA, XXIX (February 23, 1887), 114.

²⁶David Lipscomb, "Woman's Station and Work," ibid., XXX (October 10, 1888), 7.

state's liberal churches accommodated the wishes of the sisters.²⁷ On the other hand, Daniel Sommer's Indianapolis-published American Christian Review (later the Octographic Review) was probably more conservative than even the Gospel Advocate in its narrow interpretation of woman's social status.²⁸

Socio-economic factors constituted the third thread in both the Christian Church division and its members' attitudes toward woman's status. Conservative spokesmen often criticized the opulent houses of worship built by their liberal brethren. "Rich people . . . add nothing to the financial strength of a church," wrote David Lipscomb, "a rich man . . . will add more to the expenditure of the church, in seeking to conform it to the ways of the rich." When an ostentatious Christian Church building burned in Nashville, he publicly expressed joy, calling it "a blessing from God." On another occasion the Gospel Advocate publisher took special pleasure in criticizing the Central Christian Church

²⁷J. N. Clem, "Paul and the Corinthian Women," CE, XXV (April 26, 1888), 235; J. N. Clem, "Christianity, Civilization and Woman," ibid., XXIX (June 2, 1892), 341; J. N. Clem, "Paul, and Women, and Christ," CS, XXVIII (August 13, 1892), 668; Austin McGary, "Fun and Frolic," FF, I (March, 1885), 5-7; J. W. Stone, "LaVacca Dots," ibid., III (August 1, 1887), 3; J. W. Jackson, "Christian Church Sociable," ibid., V (May 30, 1889), 6; J. W. Jackson, "Card of Thanks," ibid., VI (October 9, 1890), 3.

²⁸Daniel Sommer, "Woman's Place in the Church," OR, XXXIII (May 22, 1890), 1.

in Cincinnati, Ohio, where the editorial staff of the Christian Standard worshipped. He attested that it was "a sin against God and his people to put such large sums of money" into the Central Church building "when so many thousands and millions of our fellow creatures and suffering want and going down to hell for lack of the truth."²⁹ This anti-wealth philosophy was reflected in the practices of Tennessee's conservative Disciples. According to the United States Religious Census of 1916, the Disciples owned 50 buildings in the state's four major cities. The ecumenical Christian Churches maintained 19 with an average value of \$20,000 while the evangelistic Churches of Christ possessed 31 valued at around \$4,900 each.³⁰

Socio-economic factors also influenced attitudes toward woman's social role. More than geography separated Indianapolis' Central Christian Church where Marcia Goodwin and Zerelda Wallace worked with the CWBM's national board of directors and the troubled churches of Texas which admonished their sisters not to chew and spit tobacco. Significantly, the Firm Foundation often railed against the sisters' conforming to modern fashion by wearing bustles and gold jewelry,

²⁹David Lipscomb, "Fine Houses of Worship," GA, XXXIV (January 28, 1892), 52; David Lipscomb, "The Churches Across the Mountains," ibid., XXXIX (January 7, 1897), 4.

³⁰Harrell, "The Disciples of Christ and Social Force in Tennessee," 43.

and cutting their hair into bangs.³¹ Similar admonitions were almost never found in the Christian Standard and the Christian-Evangelist.

While less affluent Disciples were suspicious of social, religious, and political changes experienced by American women, their prosperous brethren assumed a more optimistic posture. When conservative churchmen heard women demand the vote or the pulpit, they responded by waving the negative banner of Eve's transgression in the Garden of Eden. Such allusions often rankled their liberal sisters. In 1892, Persis L. Christian cried out:

The woman who is to-day underpaid, who is prohibited from making a will or having the legal guardianship of her own child, who is allowed to come into the clubhouse only on "ladies' night," or into a university only by way of an annex, is not really the woman of to-day so much as the retrospective, traditional woman whom we can not get out of our minds. She is the Eve who tempted Adam, the Herodias who wished for John the Baptist's head.³²

Doubtless Persis Christian had in mind the rhetoric of such church conservatives as Elisha Sewell who reminded his sisters "that the woman, by being first in transgression and leading her husband into it . . . multiplied sorrow and conception to

³¹Austin McGary, editorial, FF, I (April, 1885), 19-21; A Sister, "Letter from a Sister," ibid., II (October, 1885), 15-17; A. T. Cavett, "From a Sister," ibid., IV (June 1, 1888), 8; A Sister, "From a Sister," ibid. (August 15, 1888), 7; Alice Gillespie, "From a Sister," ibid., VI (June 19, 1890), 7.

³²Persis L. Christian, "Woman's Interest: Legal Condition of Women," CS, XXVII (June 25, 1892), 533.

woman, caused woman to be put under the rule of her husband by the Lord; and caused the both of them to be cast out of the garden."³³ Little wonder that one Disciple sister exclaimed with exasperation: "It was fortunate for Adam and his sons, that Eve took the first bite of apple, a woman makes such an excellent scapegoat."³⁴

The Christian Woman's Board of Missions, which was instrumental in modifying the Disciple image of woman's role, was most often associated with the larger, wealthier congregations. There it found a favorable intellectual climate as well as women who possessed sufficient leisure time to devote to extra-domestic projects. Less affluent churches were suspicious not only of woman's changing role, but also of anything that seemed to disrupt social stability. In 1895, the Christian Church in Jackson, Tennessee, split when the members of its "Ladies' Aid Society," which paid the preacher's salary, won the right to vote in the congregation's business meetings.³⁵ According to the disaffected minority, the chief architect of this move was a liberal young minister "who sometimes wears tan-colored shoes of the latest fashion, and believes in societies of all kinds usually found in progres-

³³Elisha G. Sewell, "Woman Under the Religion of Christ," GA, XXX (July 25, 1888), 8.

³⁴Memor, "A Woman's View of the Situation," CM, X (January, 1871), 18.

³⁵Minutes of the First Christian Church, Jackson, Tennessee, March 27, 1895, Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

sive churches in these modern days."³⁶ For conservative Disciples, the term "progressive" was a euphemism encompassing both social and theological heresy.

Whatever the theological, sectional, and socio-economic threads leading to the church's schism and to its dissonant image of woman's status, by century's end many Disciples recognized that the female sex was engaged in a wider variety of activities than had been the case prior to the Civil War. Most notably, those women who associated with the Christian Woman's Board of Missions became accustomed to moving in a larger social circle than allowed by the confining environment of the domestic sphere. When a male Disciple criticized the society, claiming it made its members dissatisfied with their home duties, a sister indignantly replied: "There are some of us who will try to do our duty even if it is proved, indisputably, that the C. W. B. M. and all other excellent women 'going about doing good' must, hereafter, be 'keepers at home.' . . . Sorrowfully, with empty heads, hands and hearts, we will, if we must, go back to our veils, embroidery, and deeper than oriental seclusion."³⁷ Rather than rebelling against true womanhood, these Disciple sisters simply desired to expand the active influence of "home women" beyond the

³⁶J. R. Wilkinson, "Church Troubles at Jackson, Tennessee," GA, XXXVII (June 13, 1895), 382.

³⁷Damaris, "Those Women," CS, XXVIII (June 4, 1892), 482.

domestic sphere. The success of the CWBM demonstrated the extent to which more affluent members of the Disciple movement had accommodated themselves to the feminization of American Protestant religion. This development was summarized by a CWBM lecturer who informed an Illinois convention: "The church is the mother of all God's children. Women are the church. The men of the church are the minority. Women are the majority. It is not for the minority to decide what the majority shall do. . . . Let us then do a work worthy of our privilege and power."³⁸

By the 1890's, a few Disciple women pondered on the active interpretation of the cult of true womanhood and soon began to use the term "new woman" to describe her attributes. They saw the "new woman" as having greater educational opportunities than the women of an earlier generation, engaging in social reform and philanthropy, longing for the suffrage, and, in a nebulous sort of way, possessing a sense of independence and freedom of choice not previously available to woman-kind. In the second half of the twentieth century feminism is often defined in terms of a woman having the personal autonomy to choose her life-goals and social roles regardless of the expectations of society; in this sense the Disciples' "new woman" was found wanting.³⁹ Despite their vague refer-

³⁸Mrs. McLeard Davis, "An Address," C, XVII (January 29, 1880), 2.

³⁹Gerda Lerner, "Woman's Rights and American Feminism," American Scholar, XL (Spring, 1971), 235-37.

ences to the "independence" of contemporary women, Christian Church representatives continued to define the status of the female sex within the context of a wife, mother, daughter, or sister.

Both Jessie H. Brown and Mrs. T. P. Holman praised the "new woman" and both demonstrated the Disciples' limited view of her independence. In her discussion of the "New Womanhood," Brown rejoiced at "the progress of woman along the various avenues of intellectual activity." This not only provided opportunities for "gifted women," she observed, but also insured a broader social outlook for "the great majority of women." Nonetheless, Brown defined her sex's status in terms of the image of woman as an assistant to man:

Man's victories will always be determined very largely by woman's expectations. What the mother expects of her son, what the sister expects of her brother, what the wife expects of her husband--the expectations will be the prophecy and measure of achievement.³⁹

Brown's definition of the "new womanhood" contained strong similarities to an active interpretation of the cult of true womanhood.

Mrs. T. P. Holman, the perennial nemesis of David Lipscomb, shared Jessie Brown's interpretation of the "new woman." The Fayetteville, Tennessee, housewife and leader in the state's Women's Christian Temperance Union took comfort that education

⁴⁰Jessie H. Brown, "The New Womanhood," CS, XXIX (May 6, 1893), 354.

had opened doors of opportunity for her sex. Although she rejected the concept that young women "were a failure if they did not marry," she nonetheless maintained a limited view of woman's independence. "I think that one of the most hopeful signs of the times," she wrote, "is . . . that the 'new woman' will not have to 'marry for a living,' a thing so degrading in thought or fact that no true woman could look on it but with horror; but she will marry because she has found her king, and love has made her a willing captive." Mrs. Holman continued to define the "new woman" in terms of her relationship to a man. Rather than see any threat to social stability, she assumed that the "new woman" fitted well within an ordered society. She concluded:

As men advance women will advance in spite of any effort to keep them in the old grooves; and men from age to age will go on loving their women folks, whatever the tide of progress makes of them, just the same; and just as womankind will always love their men, always thinking they are best just as they find them, and that any change would be for the worse. God made them that way, and no law of man or condition of society can ever make it otherwise.⁴⁰

Despite the acceptance by many Disciples of women engaged in a wide variety of activities, they failed to develop an ideology which would give to the female sex a large degree of personal autonomy. Even though some church leaders advocated suffrage, the right to preach, and the propriety of

⁴¹Mrs. T. P. Holman, "The New Woman, No. 2," GA, XXXVIII (July 16, 1896), 453.

engaging in reform, they still saw woman within the context of the domestic sphere and as a wife, a mother, a sister, or a daughter. Although modified in some important respects, by century's end the cult of true womanhood continued to set the parameters of women's status. Still, change was in the offing. Once a woman left the home sphere, even in the name of saving the family, the limited requirements of domestic duties seemed less than satisfying.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STATUS OF DISCIPLE WOMEN

Among the Disciples of Christ, the status of woman changed little from 1865 to 1900. In common with others of the American middle class, church leaders looked to Christian wives and mothers to preserve morality and tradition in what they considered an increasingly disordered world. They envisioned home as the cornerstone of society where woman-kind was instrumental in making it a sanctuary for both husband and children. Even when the Disciples allowed their sisters to enter extra-domestic occupations, the approved professions were little more than auxiliaries. Most notably, teaching young children in school was seen as a natural maternal outlet, and, as in the case of Marcia Goodwin, women could edit periodicals and write for church papers if by doing so they helped other women to improve their management of the home. At century's end, both liberal and conservative churchmen continued to see their sisters within the context of "true womanhood."

Caught up in this emphasis on motherhood and the family, virtually all Disciples adamantly rejected the feminist campaign for sexual equality which they assumed contributed to society's disorder. Although they were generally mistaken in their interpretation of the movement, church leaders con-

tinually accused feminists of being anti-family. They shared with many middle class representatives the belief that the radical philosophy of Victoria Woodhull and others of her inclination were typical of the mainstream of feminist thought. Thus, whenever more moderate women advocated such woman's rights as ordination, voting, and even moral reform, liberal and conservative Disciples rose up in opposition, hoping to protect the sanctity of domestic life. To be sure, church liberals eventually accepted many of the aims of woman's rights. But they consistently rejected these when advocates linked them in rhetoric with the feminist goals of sexual equality. At least among the Disciples of Christ, feminism hindered rather than aided the cause of woman's rights.

Despite the church's universal opposition to feminism, at century's end a liberal majority approved woman's right to vote, to preach, and to engage in moral reform. Although the discussion over female ordination centered in part around complicated theological differences within the movement, the church's debate over the question of woman's rights generally revolved around her status as homemaker and mother.

Conservatives affirmed that woman's greatest influence was exercised only in the home. Christian mothers had the obligation to train their daughters for maternal responsibilities and to prepare their sons to engage in the active world beyond the family. Whenever a woman left the home for any

purpose, she ran the risk of soiling her purity and of neglecting her family, allowing them to wander dangerously without maternal guidance. Evangelistic Disciples repeatedly stated their belief that those associated with women's reform organizations neglected their children who were surely destined to become juvenile delinquents.

On the other hand, liberal Disciples found the cause of woman's rights acceptable when associated with those who they saw as modest females campaigning to save or preserve the sanctity of the home. Ecumenical ministers welcomed their sisters into an active role in the church's polity. Working under both the assumption of woman's moral superiority to man and the belief that the female was more inclined to protect the family than the male, these churchmen granted to women a much wider social role. Liberal ministers believed that women should preach because the tender pleadings of the more virtuous sex were missing from the pulpit; they assumed that mothers should vote because they would protect their children by supporting prohibition, the abolition of prostitution, and the outlawing of gambling; and they believed that women should engage in moral reform because "organized mother love" would bring the virtues of the Christian family into society as a whole. Among the Disciples of Christ, the image of "home-women" fighting for the home was the chief ideological concept leading to their acceptance of woman's rights.

The Disciples of Christ were not among those organizations that advocated radical change in woman's social role and they added little that was original in the debate over woman's status. Abstract feminist arguments based on equality and justice held little meaning for them. They were much more concerned with a pragmatic search for order in a society that seemed disorganized and decadent. All Disciples looked upon the female sex as one of the chief elements in the preservation of an ideal commonwealth. In the final analysis, their divided concept of woman's role was far less dissimilar than it appeared to those involved in the debate. Fundamentally, the Disciples differed over whether woman best served by remaining cloistered in the home and there protecting it from the evils of the outside world; or, whether she best served by securing rights sufficient to enable her to go into the world and there combat the evils that threatened her domestic felicity.

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APPENDIX

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PERIODICAL ABBREVIATIONS

<u>ACR</u>	<u>American Christian Review</u>
<u>AH</u>	<u>American Housewife</u>
<u>AT</u>	<u>Apostolic Times</u>
<u>C</u>	<u>Christian</u>
<u>CC</u>	<u>Christian Companion</u>
<u>CE</u>	<u>Christian-Evangelist</u>
<u>CM</u>	<u>Christian Monitor</u>
<u>CO</u>	<u>Christian Oracle</u>
<u>CP</u>	<u>Christian Pioneer</u>
<u>CQ</u>	<u>Christian Quarterly</u>
<u>CQR</u>	<u>Christian Quarterly Review</u>
<u>CS</u>	<u>Christian Standard</u>
<u>E</u>	<u>Evangelist</u>
<u>FF</u>	<u>Firm Foundation</u>
<u>GA</u>	<u>Gospel Advocate</u>
<u>GE</u>	<u>Gospel Echo</u>
<u>LCM</u>	<u>Ladies' Christian Monitor</u>
<u>LQ</u>	<u>Lard's Quarterly</u>
<u>MT</u>	<u>Missionary Tidings</u>
<u>NCQ</u>	<u>New Christian Quarterly</u>
<u>OR</u>	<u>Octographic Review</u>
<u>OPG</u>	<u>Old Paths Guide</u>

VITA

Fred Arthur Bailey was born to Fred L. and Dorothy M. Bailey on March 28, 1947, in Dumas, Arkansas, and subsequently lived in Little Rock, Arkansas, Jefferson City, Missouri, Springfield, Missouri, and Memphis, Tennessee. He received his B.A. degree from Harding College, Searcy, Arkansas, in 1970, and his M.A. degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in 1972. His M.A. thesis was entitled "Oliver Perry Temple, New South Agrarian." From it he derived two publications: "Legalities, Agriculture, and Immigration: The Role of Oliver Perry Temple in the Rugby Experiment," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, no. 44 (1972), 90-103; and "Oliver Perry Temple and the Struggle for Tennessee's Agricultural College," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXXVI (Spring, 1977), 44-61. After 1972, he continued his graduate work at the University of Tennessee, where his dissertation was accepted in August, 1979. In 1973, he was employed in the Department of History and Political Science at Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee. He has also taught for the evening school at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and for the continuing education program at Jackson State Community College, Jackson, Tennessee. He is married to the former Bonnie Pitt of Memphis, Tennessee. They have three children, Amber (born 1974), Alex (born 1975), and Stan (born 1979).