

Our mother who art in heaven, and on earth



Highland Views

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Guest columnist

As a pioneer in women's rights, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) was known as the philosopher of the movement. From her early championing of abolition to her many years leading the way for equality, her voice rang clear from podium and pen. Apart from writing her own addresses to conventions and legislatures, she wrote speeches for Susan Brownell Anthony, a Declaration of Sentiments (Seneca Falls, 1848) and a Declaration of Rights of Women for the 1876 Cen-

ennial celebrations in Philadelphia.

In later years, Stanton wrote her autobiographical "Eighty Years and More" (1898) including the story of her honeymoon in London with her groom, Henry Stanton. Attending an anti-slavery convention together, Elizabeth found herself excluded alongside other women delegates not allowed to speak because of their gender. "It was really pitiful," she writes, "to hear narrow-minded bigots, pretending to be teachers and leaders of men, so cruelly remanding their own mothers, with the rest of womankind, to absolute subjection to the ordinary masculine type of humanity."

This frustrating experience led to her bonding with a new friend, the Quaker preacher, Lucretia Mott, who became a lifelong collaborator in the cause.

As the mother of seven children, Stanton's "most

popular lectures were those on marriage and children, in which she advanced from advice on household management and baby care to a discussion of divorce reform, property rights or birth control" (Elizabeth Griffith, "In Her Own Right").

In 1881 Stanton published the first volume of "History of Woman Suffrage," highlighting the progress as well as obstacles in the slow struggle to break out of the so-called "heaven-ordained spheres" women were assigned to by the male-dominated culture.

Like her freethinking predecessor, Thomas Paine, Stanton discovered there was one major resistance to reform, standing in the way of progress: orthodox religion. In 1895 she published a book that shook not only

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