I found Mrs. Blackwell at her daughter's home on the outskirts of Elizabeth. She is a bright-eyed, white-haired little old woman, somewhat past 80 years. Beyond a little deafness she seems in almost perfect condition. She talked very freely of her career. Her father was a farmer living at Henrietta, New York, not far from Rochester and not far from Susan B. Anthony's father. He was a very liberal man and encouraged his serious-minded daughter in her ambitions for study and for work. She was able at home to fit herself for college, but there was no college in her vicinity then to receive her. She began to teach and finally in 1846 decided to enter Oberlin. She was deeply religious and felt that the most important thing in the world was to convert people in the old fashioned orthodox way. She tells with much amusement of how on her way to Oberlin she met an old friend of the family who knew the place and who warned her that she should not be too intimate at school with a rather dangerous young woman known as Lucy Stone. Mrs. Blackwell describes her first impressions of Lucy discussing animatedly with two or three young men. She says her first idea was that she talked altogether too much. The two girls afterward became good friends. Lucy already was preparing for public life; anti-slavery, temperance and woman's rights being the themes on which she expected to lecture. Antoinette confided to her that she expected to become a preacher. Lucy when she heard this stopped in amazement and said "They will never let you do it."
...even Prof. Finney at first objected, though he admitted afterward in his judgment women sometimes were called to speak. Mrs. Finney, the president's first wife labored earnestly with Mrs. Blackwell, trying to disuade her from her undertaking. She could not conceive that a young woman would dare to place herself in opposition to the judgment of all the wise men of all the years, though Mrs. Blackwell called her attention to the fact that this was what Prof. Finney had done in his decision. The first lecture that she remembers having given was in 1846. She was teaching school in Rochester, Michigan. Here the superintendent of the school was a very liberal man and he, knowing that she wanted to be a minister, urged her to begin speaking them and there for practice, which she did. Her first sermon was delivered in Henrietta, Ohio. After she left college she began to lecture on temperance, anti-slavery, woman's rights, etc.

Her first woman's rights convention was the one held in Worcester, Mass. She at that time had begun to do missionary work in New York City. Her appearance at Worcester was the signal for Miss Mott and the rest to invite her onto the platform and she became after that a regular speaker on the radical platform. She spoke much for Miss Anthony in New York and after the war speaks of long suffrage trips taken with Miss Anthony in New York State. They seem indeed to have stumped the state two or three times. She speaks very kindly of Susan B. She says when she started out, she had the characteristics of the seasoned school marm, but that afterward she became much more gentle and tolerant. She says that always she wanted Everybody to say what he thought
on any platform that she was controlling. She says that there never was a woman who had less self-consciousness, that she was completely absorbed in the subject under discussion, and would tackle anybody who advanced views with which she did disagree. She emphasized the point that in these early days the men were quite as much responsible for the woman’s suffrage movement as the women themselves. She says this point has never been emphasized as it should be. She speaks particularly of the help that Mr. Greeley gave the cause until such a time as the tactics of the women embittered him. She agrees with me that Mrs. Stanton views on divorce was a great trial to Mr. Greeley and helped drive him away. She also misrepresented his and Mrs. Greeley’s caused relations and embittered him much bitterness of spirit.

Mrs. Blackwell was not ordained until 1868 and her first church was in South Butler, N. J. Up to this time she had been completely orthodox, in spite of the fact that many of the radical women with whom she associated were anything but orthodox. The term “infidel” which was a popular one of the day is to strong too apply, but they religious they were very free thinkers on subjects is certain. Soon after she was ordained Darwin and Spencer fell into Mrs. Blackwell’s hands and she suffered a complete revolution of religious believe. She says herself that she simply believed nothing and did not know where she was at. This caused her so much distress that only four months after being ordained, on the plea that her health was failing, she gave up her church. She continued, however, speaking on woman’s rights, temperance and other liberal topics. In 1868 she married Mr. Blackwell, brother of Lucy Stone’s husband and gradually she settled down into a form of Unitarianism. She has always preached more or less and today appears once a month in the little church at Elizabeth which she helped build.
I asked her about the attitude of the woman's rights crowd in the Civil War. She says that they were very critical of Lincoln through all these years—thought that he did not move fast enough.

I asked her about Ernestine Rose. She says it is true that she and Miss Rose frequently clashed on the platform because of very divergent views. She speaks of her as being a handsome woman, but not a popular lecturer. Thinks that her slight foreign accent was attractive rather than repellent, but that she found it very difficult to get the American point of view.