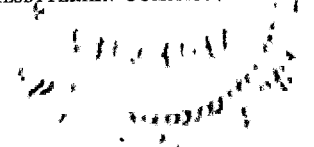


THE SPHERE AND RIGHTS
OF
WOMAN IN THE CHURCH.

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Stated Clerk.

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THE SPHERE AND RIGHTS OF WOMAN IN THE CHURCH.

This Synod, at its sessions in Fredericksburg, Va., 1897, appointed a committee "to make a thorough and special study of the word of God upon the sphere and rights of woman in the church of God, especially in the public exercises thereof, such as leading in prayer and making public addresses before mixed audiences, conducting such services, and the public preaching of the word." (Minutes, 1897, p. 517.)

A report from that committee was presented to the last Synod, and, after discussion and proposed amendment, the Synod resolved "that the last Synod's instructions in regard to 'woman's sphere,' etc., together with the consideration of the movement, now current, bearing upon woman in the home and church, be referred to a new committee, who shall continue the investigation thereof and report the result of the same to the next regular meeting of Synod;" and "that all papers on the subject presented before this Synod be put into their hands for reference." (Minutes, 1898, p. 53.)

In discharging the duty thus imposed, your committee has reached the conclusion that they will best meet the design and wish of the Synod, not by a sketch of the rise and rapid and alarming development of the "Woman's Movement," but by a full and plain statement of the teachings of the word of God as to the rights and duties of woman in the church of God and in the home.

Accordingly, we submit the following as the result of our study of the subject:

1. What the Scriptures teach as to woman's place, rights and duties in the home.

"Order is heaven's first law." This necessitates government of some sort—the due subordination of the ruled to the rulers. Even in heaven there are thrones, dominions, etc. (Col. i. 16), and before the fall of man there was government in Eden; the woman was created out of and for the man. After man fell, and thus became depraved, for the good of the race the authority of human government was published anew by the ordinance of God, and began historically, practically and potentially in the family. The first law of human government is, "Thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Gen. iii., 16.) In this law the principle of subordination is distinctly affirmed and emphasized on the additional ground that the woman was first in transgression. The

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principle thus established by divine authority was, by the same authority, republished at the fall and perpetuated through both dispensations. The man is made the head of the woman, and a broad distinction between his and her rights and duties is everywhere drawn, and often with clear reference to her part in the fall as one of the occasions for such difference. This principle was recognized and followed in the family of Abraham. Sarah called him lord (Gen. xviii. 19), and this is sanctioned and made an example in 1 Peter iii. 5, 6, "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, . . . being in subjection to their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord," etc. This subordination is also recognized and applied in the law, civil and ceremonial. So the apostle affirms in 1 Cor. xiv. 34, "As saith the law." Even the religious vows of woman were made subject to the will of her father or husband (Num. xxx. 3). There are also some very significant references to the distinctions which God would have remembered and obeyed in the regulations for the purifications of men and women in Leviticus (chapters xii. and xv). In the noted passages in 1 Cor. xi. and xiv. and in 1 Tim. ii., which will be discussed more fully below, this broad law is appealed to and applied by the inspired apostle to the subject before him, namely, woman's ruling and speaking in the church, and is said by him to be according to nature, to reason, to instinctive sense of propriety, to law, and to gospel. The importance of maintaining in every way the distinctions drawn in the word of God, between the spheres and duties of men and women is further shown in the remarkable passage, Deut. xxii. 5, where we read, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God." Anything that conceals or confuses these distinctions or obscures the great moral questions involved is stamped with the same condemnation as idolatry itself—it is abomination unto God. Another consideration, drawn from reason and confirmed by the Scriptures, for this subordination of woman to man is the fact that, in the family, parents are responsible for the being of the child, and its destiny for time and for eternity, is under God committed to them more than to all other agents and agencies combined. The proper care and development of children necessarily forbids two equal and independent heads of the family. "It is confusion."

While thus made subordinate to man, woman is not regarded nor to be treated as inferior. While she is to be "in subjection" (1 Peter iii. 5); to "submit" (Eph. v. 22; Col. iii. 18), to "be obedient unto" (Titus ii. 5) her own husband, yet she is to receive honor (1 Peter iii. 7), and to be loved and cherished (Eph. v. 25; Col. iii. 19). The husband and wife are one flesh, and if this is properly realized, there is no room for abuse or compulsion.

This subordination of woman by divine appointment the "Woman's Movement" ignores or denies.

The family, the home, is by the Scriptures made the special sphere of woman. There is her true throne, and there center her duties, her rights, and there is exercised her widest dominion. Woman, as seen in Gen. xvi. 6, 9 (Sarah and Hagar), and as described and so highly commended in the well-known passage Prov. xxxi. 10-31, is just what she is required to be in Titus ii. 5, "Keepers (or workers, R. V.) at home," and does what is commanded in 1 Tim. v. 14, "Guide the house." Bad women are described as the opposite, "She is loud and stubborn: her feet abide not in her house. Now is she without, now in the streets," etc. (Prov. vii. 11; 1 Tim. v. 13). "Wandering from house to house," characterizes those on whom the censure of the Holy Spirit falls heavily.

The true woman is spoken of, and *all* are enjoined to be discreet, modest, meek and quiet; and the home, the place of her strongest and best influence, inspiration describes as a place of quiet, of privacy and of purity. For this position in the family and home she is divinely authorized and divinely prepared by that love which only a true woman can have and manifest. The home and the family, the last and strongest bulwark of society, of the state and of the church, the "Woman's Movement" tends to undermine and destroy.

2. What the Scriptures teach as to woman's sphere and rights in the church.

(a.) The Scriptures forbid a woman to hold office or bear rule in the church.

In Paul's First Epistle to Timothy he declares that his object is to instruct Timothy as to the organization and conduct of the church or "house of God." In that epistle he states the law, regulating the holding of office by women in these words, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach or to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (1 Tim. ii. 11, 12). "To exercise authority," or to have dominion over," is the correct rendering of the Greek rather than "to usurp authority," as our revision has it. There is no room for difference of opinion as to that. The express statement of the Holy Spirit, speaking through the apostle, is this, "I suffer not a woman to exercise authority over the man."

This rule for the government of the church is here based upon the broad law (already referred to above) controlling the relation of the sexes in every sphere of their intercourse—the *subordination of woman to man*. The woman is not, in any of the ordinary conditions of life, to exercise authority over the man. This law the apostle simply appeals to and applies to the case before him, namely, the ruling and instruction of the church—in the church, he says. "I suffer not a woman to exercise authority over the man." This passage does not stand alone; but wherever the Scriptures approach the subject, the same general principle emerges into clear statement—from Gen. iii. 16, onward to the days of the apostles.

In the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians, discussing the relation

of woman to public official functions the Apostle Paul says, "But I would have you to know . . . that the head of the woman is the man" (vs. 3), and again, "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man" (vs. 8, 9). Writing to the Ephesians the same apostle says, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord: for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. . . . Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Eph. v. 22-24).

Thus it is seen that this broad principle, the subordination by divine appointment of woman to man, everywhere assumed or expressed when the subject is touched upon at all is in 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12, formally applied to woman's exercising authority in the church.

In addition to this explicit declaration of the law in the Scriptures, we find the mind of the Spirit clearly indicated in the fact that all the appointments to office, under the old and the new dispensations, were appointments of men and not of women. The priests of the old dispensation and the Levites, who ministered in sacred things, were invariably men. The members of the Sanhedrim were men, and so were the judges and all the sovereigns of Israel, except Deborah and Athaliah, and the record as to these shows how exceptional was the one and unauthorized the other. In the New Testament we read of the appointment to office of men only. The apostles were men. In every mention of elders and deacons—save in the case of Phœbe in Romans xvi., to which we will refer later—it is either expressly stated or clearly implied that they were men. In the third chapter of First Timothy, when the qualifications for the eldership and the deaconate are enumerated, it is said of each office that the candidate to be eligible must be the husband of one wife. No corresponding rule is given for woman looking to the possibility of a woman filling either of these offices. It is evident that throughout the whole of this instructive passage, and the corresponding one in Titus, the apostle, guided by the Holy Spirit, thought only of men in relation to church officers.

The conclusion that the word of God does not permit woman to hold office or bear rule in the church is still further strengthened by the absolute absence of any rules or advice as to the conduct of woman when official and domestic duties might seem to conflict. Now, the fullness of the instruction given by the Bible as to woman's domestic duties, and its silence as to the duties of office, is an indication that no official duties were expected of her. What, therefore, the Bible *does not* say of woman's holding office in the church is as instructive as what it *does say*. The silence is profound and impressive.

(b.) The Scriptures do not permit a woman to *preach, exhort* or *lead in prayer* in a public assembly, but they *command her to keep silence*.

As an instance of this teaching, we refer again to 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12, where the law that a woman must not teach in public, but keep silence,

is deduced as a corollary from the law that forbids her to exercise authority. According to the Scriptures, to publicly teach or preach is to exercise authority in the matter of *doctrine*; at least, they afford no clear instance of a different use of the words for teaching and preaching. So the apostle first forbids this special exercise of authority, and then falls back upon the general law, "I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority," etc. This prohibition is so sweeping that it extends even to the act of public leading in prayer. Indeed, it is the public praying of woman at which he strikes first, and which suggests the public speaking, and leads him to discuss that. In verse 8 he says, "I will therefore that (the) men pray everywhere." In sharp contrast with this he says in the next verse, "In like manner that (the) women adorn themselves in modest apparel," etc., and in verse 11, "Let the women learn in silence."

The contrast between men and women and the place each may occupy in public is as clear-cut as the Greek language could make it. The word for men (*τοὺς ἄνδρας*) means men as contradistinguished from women. But, as if to emphasize this contrast, the *τοὺς ἄνδρας* is still further contrasted with the generic word for mankind (*πάντες ἄνθρωποι*) as embracing women also, which occurs in verses 1 and 4 of the same chapter.

Prayer, says the apostle, must be made for all men (*πάντων ἀνθρώπων*); all mankind, men and women (vs. 1); God will have all men to be saved (*πάντας ἀνθρώπους*); all mankind, men and women (vs. 4). But who shall offer prayer in public for all mankind? He answers in verse 8, "I will therefore that (the) men (*τοὺς ἄνδρας*) pray everywhere," but verses 11 and 12, "Let the women learn in silence." Another passage equally clear and strong is 1 Cor. xiv. 34. The punctuation here is not correctly made in the English version, for the last clause of verse 33 clearly belongs to verse 34. This is the opinion of Dr. Charles Hodge, Meyer and other expositors. The text then would read, "As in all the churches of the saints, let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak."

It should be noted as a fact of no small significance that the occasion for the first known authoritative treatment of the question of woman's place and duty in the church under the new dispensation arose out of the condition of a church signally marked by disorders in its public worship. It is the evident aim of the inspired apostle to correct these disorders in the Corinthian church, such as the profanation of the Lord's Supper, the obtrusiveness of those who had the gift of tongues, the desire of too many speakers to speak at the same meeting, the confusion of more than one speaker trying to speak at the same time, and the disposition of women to speak in public. For each of these he provides special remedy; and with reference to the last, the public speaking of women, he delivers a peremptory prohibition, "Let your women keep silence in

the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak." The language is direct, strong and entirely free from ambiguity, "Let them keep silence," "It is not permitted unto them to speak." Prophets may speak, two or three of them at the same meeting; those who have the gift of tongues may speak, provided an interpreter is present; but of the women he says they must "not speak" at all, but they must "keep silence." The apostle reinforces this teaching by appealing to (a) the practice in all the churches of the saints, (b) to the universal sense of feminine propriety, "for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (vs. 35), and (c) to the Scriptures, "As also saith the law," and then closes the discussion by asserting (vs. 37) "that the things that I write unto you are the commandment of the Lord."

Attempts, many and varied, have been made to weaken, evade or deny these teachings of the word of God as to woman's place and duty in the church. Some of them so boldly impeach the wisdom and authority of the Lord Jesus, as shown by his acts while in the flesh, and also the wisdom and authority of the Holy Spirit speaking through the apostles, as to entitle them to but slight notice; but there are others professedly based upon the Bible itself. Some of these, as briefly as we can, we now present and discuss.

(1) It is claimed that whatever may have been the law as to the subordination of woman in the church under the old dispensation, this has been changed under the new dispensation; for does not the Apostle Paul say in Galatians iii. 28 that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"? And in the similar passage in Colossians iii. 11, does he not teach that all distinctions in the church are abolished, and all are put on one and the same plane?

A glance at the context in both of the passages cited shows that the apostle had reference to the blessings of redemption and the privileges of membership in the church, which are common to all believers, and not to the privileges of office and rule in the church. Moreover, to put the construction claimed by objectors to his teachings in reference to woman upon these passages is only to make the apostle flatly contradict himself when, in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, he excludes from *office novices* and *converts* who *before conversion* had practiced *polygamy*. It also brings him into conflict with his plain teachings as to woman in the church in the passages already cited, and with the necessary implications of the Scriptures that debar children from holding office and teaching in the church. It is simply a perversion of the meaning of the passages in Galatians and Ephesians, and is founded upon a radical and false theory of "the rights of man."

(2) Another evasion is founded upon the claim that the word rendered "to speak" in 1 Cor. xiv. 34 (*λαλεῖν*) means only "to babble" or "to speak foolishly," as if the apostle's meaning were, "It is not permitted unto them to talk foolishly." A mere glance at some of the nearly two

hundred places in which the word is used in the New Testament is sufficient to show that that position is untenable. In Luke v. 4 the same word is used of the preaching of Jesus, and in Acts xiv. it is employed to express the preaching of Paul and Barnabas. Was Jesus and were Paul and Barnabas "babbling"? In fact the word has the widest range of meaning and denotes any sort of talking. When, therefore, the apostle says that women are not permitted to speak in the churches and uses the word *λαλεῖν* to express it, it indicates that every sort of speaking in public by them is prohibited. Besides the apostle himself defines the word by its opposite when he not only declares that women may "not speak," but adds the express command to them to "keep silence."

(3) Many strive to break the force of the teaching in 1 Cor. xiv. 34 and 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12 by putting over against them the teaching of 1 Cor. xi. 5, "Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head." It is argued that in this text the Apostle Paul alludes to a practice, which evidently existed in Corinth, of women praying and prophesying in public with their heads uncovered; and that whereas he condemns the keeping of their heads uncovered while praying and prophesying, and does not condemn the act of praying and prophesying, it is equivalent to a tacit approval of that act. Now it cannot be denied that this text does prove the existence of that custom in Corinth; nor can it be denied that, if this text were the only utterance of the Scriptures on the subject, it would prove that Paul did not condemn the custom, except as to its manner; but this text does not stand alone. It must be interpreted in connection and in harmony with the two passages already cited, as well as with the principles underlying the Bible treatment of the whole subject.

Consider it in relation to 1 Cor. xiv. 34, in which we have a perfectly simple statement of a law: Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak. Now in the eleventh chapter it seems to be plainly implied that a woman may both pray and preach in public if she will only cover her head while doing so. This appears to be a flat contradiction. Therefore the verse in chapter xiv. must not, cannot, be taken literally.

In explanation and removal of the seeming contradiction we submit these considerations.

First, if two passages seem to contradict each other, it becomes a question as to which shall yield to the other. Common sense would dictate that the clearer and stronger should prevail over the weaker and more obscure. In the case before us there can be no doubt that 1 Cor. xiv. 34 is far stronger and more explicit than 1 Cor. xi. 5.

Second. It must be noted that there is no contradiction between the *statements* contained in the two texts. What contradiction there seems to be lies between a categorical *statement* in the one text, and a mere *inference from the statement* in the other. The one passage forbids in express terms the public speaking of women, while the other passage does

not say in equally express terms that a woman may speak in public; but only that, if she speaks publicly with uncovered head, she dishonors her head. The conclusion, that she is at liberty to speak in public if she will only keep her head covered, is merely an inference that ought not to be entertained for a moment in the face of a flatly contradictory statement like that in 1 Cor. xiv. 34, or that in 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. The Holy Spirit never contradicts himself.

But, third. The women alluded to in xi. 5, who prayed and prophesied with uncovered heads, were guilty of two offences—public speaking and improperly attiring themselves. Both were evidently before the mind of the apostle both here and in the corresponding passage in First Timothy. In 1 Cor. xi. 5 he attacks at first only one of these evils, namely, that of immodest attire. In his nervous, rapid style of discourse he does not take up the other of the two evils—public speaking—until he reaches that part of his discourse now included in chapter xiv., when he plainly and absolutely forbids it. In one passage he deals with and condemns the *manner*, in the other the *act* itself. Even in chapter xi. he lays the foundation for the reproof of woman's preaching and shows clearly that he had it in his mind as an evil when he emphasizes the law that "the head of the woman is the man" (vs. 3).

Some, as Meyer, seek the solution of the seeming contradiction between these passages by assuming that Paul is discussing two different kinds of meetings. In chapter xi. it is an informal prayer meeting, or meeting for social worship, at which women might pray and prophesy with covered heads, while in chapter xiv. the meeting contemplated is the formal public worship on the Lord's day, at which the women were commanded to keep silence. The difficulty with this theory is that chapter xiv. evidently contemplates an informal social meeting if either passage does—not a meeting at which there is a single preacher leading the worship or assisted by other ministers—but one at which all are free to participate, and at which the apostle permits them to take part, provided they do so in a decent and orderly way, and the women observe the becoming silence. So far then from any real contradiction existing between 1 Cor. xi. 5 and 1 Cor. xiv. 34, they complement each other and bring out together only the clearer and stronger the "mind of the Spirit" that women "keep silence in the churches."

(4) Perhaps the most frequent attempt to justify the modification or denial of these prohibitions of woman's ruling and teaching in the church is based upon the facts that in both the Old and the New Testaments women exercised the functions of prophets; that under the New Testament Paul seems (Romans xvi. 1) to recognize in Phœbe an officer or deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, and in 1 Tim. v. refers to certain widows about whom he gives specific instructions as to their admission to some sphere of church work; and in Romans xvi. 3, and Phil. iv. 3, speaks in high commendation of certain women who labored with him in the gospel. Reference is also made to the Samaritan woman telling

the men of Sychar about Jesus, and the announcement of the fact of the resurrection by Mary Magdalene and the other women. It is argued that since the Lord Jesus and the angels entrusted the publication of this great fact of the gospel first of all to women he thereby sanctioned their preaching the gospel. Apart from the extraordinary aspects of this instance, it cannot serve those who use it to authorize public preaching to promiscuous assemblies. For the direction was explicit to tell *the disciples*, while the record is that they told it to "the disciples," his "brethren" (Matthew); "to them that had been with him," "his disciples" (Mark); "unto the eleven and to all the rest," "unto the apostles" (Luke), "my brethren" (John). So that, if it bears at all upon the sphere and rights of woman in the church, it only authorizes preaching to the *officers and members of the church*. But there is nothing in this case nor in that of the Samaritan woman to indicate anything more than the recognition of the love of these devoted women in sending them on this special and definite errand, or the simple telling of a startling incident to her neighbors by a deeply moved woman. Certainly nothing as to the future conduct of women as official teachers can be necessarily inferred from these instances. As to Paul's reference to Phœbe and his fellow-workers among the women, it is sufficient to say that there is nothing to show conclusively that there ever existed an order of deaconesses in the apostolic church; nor that there was anything more in the work of these women, whom he so highly commends than every pastor finds in this day among the godly mothers, wives and sisters of his congregation.

In regard to the widows mentioned in 1 Tim. v., while frankly admitting the obscurity that gathers about the whole passage, the age limit of sixty years, with the other limitations and qualifications enumerated, precludes the idea of formal official public teaching, and point rather to such ministrations as they might give or receive, and as are now given and received by the aged sick and infirm and needy.

The argument against the whole position that the Holy Spirit speaking through the Scriptures prohibits woman from teaching and praying in public, that it is in conflict with the teaching of that same Spirit in what the Bible has to say about prophetesses, such as Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, the daughters of Philip and others, is based upon a strange and unwarranted assumption regarding the office and functions of a prophet, namely, that any one who in any sense speaks for God to man is a *prophet*, and any speaking "unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv. 3) is *prophesying*. A careful study of the word of God reveals this as an assumption; for the Scriptures uniformly, in both the Old and the New Testaments, make a wide and clear distinction between prophets and prophesying, and all other teachers and teaching of the will of God.

"They clearly teach that a prophet is a spokesman, one who speaks for another, so that what one says the other says. The man, therefore,

who stands in the relation of prophet to God is, so long as that relation subsists, the mouthpiece of God, and his words are the words of God. . . . Hence they so often begin their discourse with 'thus saith the Lord.' . . . A prophet was a man inspired, a man under such an influence from the Spirit of God as rendered him an infallible messenger from God. . . . All men ordained to the ministry, whether under the old dispensation or the new, are in one sense prophets." But they are never called prophets nor their teaching described as prophesying. "None but inspired, that is, infallible, messengers are called prophets. This under both dispensations was the discriminating difference between ordinary teachers and prophets. This distinction is made specially clear in 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29, 'And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.' . . . Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" And also in Eph. iv. 11, "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." All pastors were teachers, but they were not all prophets. That is, it was inspiration—often including revelation "and consequently prediction"—which was the essential characteristic of a prophet. Some were permanently inspired and were recognized as the official organs of God among his people, as Moses and Paul. Others were only occasionally recipients of that divine influence, hence the apostles spoke to them and of them as their inferiors. (See 1 Cor. xiv. 37.) Hence also we hear of their receiving sudden revelations (1 Cor. xiv. 30), and in the Old Testament frequent expressions are employed indicative of occasional accessions of divine influence, as 'the word of the Lord came unto me,' etc. A prophet, then, was a teacher sent from God. . . . It mattered not whether the message referred to past sins or to present duties or to future events, he was specially inspired to deliver it as an infallible message from God." (*Dr. Charles Hodge*). The claim to possess inspiration by false prophets of Jehovah and by the prophets of false gods caused them to be designated by the same names.

Now, in support of this conclusion we point not only to the texts above cited, but to the further fact that, after careful examination, we find that the Holy Spirit employs, in speaking of prophets and their functions, both in Hebrew and Greek, words that are never used to express any other preaching, teaching or even telling of the gospel message. The Holy Spirit seems to reserve these terms exclusively to set forth the office and functions of this special and extraordinary class of messengers of God to man.

In the Old Testament under their various forms the verb נָבֵא and the noun נְבִיא are employed about four hundred times, and in the New Testament the verb προφητεύω and the noun προφήτης about one hundred and seventy-five times. Whenever the Holy Spirit would set forth preaching, teaching and telling, entirely different words are used, such as

בָּשַׂר, "to bring or tell good tidings;" קָרָא, "to call, proclaim, preach;" יָרָה, "to show, direct, teach;" לָמַד, "to teach;" נָגִיד, "to put before, declare;" דִּבֶּר, "to speak;" אָמַר, "to say, lift up the voice," and

διαγγέλλω, διαλέγομαι, εὐαγγελίζω, κηρύσσω, διδάσκω, εἶπον, λέγω, etc., etc. These are never used interchangeably with the words expressing prophesying. Does not this necessarily indicate a wide distinction in the mind of the Spirit between preaching and prophesying? We submit, therefore, that, since the prophetesses of the Old and New Testaments had an exceptional and supernatural call, no just nor safe argument can be drawn from them against the general and ordinary rule prescribed by the inspired apostle.

"It is bad logic," says Dr. Dabney, "to infer because Deborah prophesied when the supernatural impulse of the Spirit moved her, therefore any pious woman who feels only the impulses of ordinary grace may usurp the function of the public preacher." Another writer in the St. Louis *Presbyterian* pointedly says, "Prophesying was speaking for God under the immediate inspiration from God. Prophesying was a miraculous gift bestowed upon men and sometimes upon women while the Bible was being made. God speaks to us, since the closing of the canon of the Scriptures, not by persons immediately inspired to declare his will, but by his *inspired word*."

We have no proof that any man or woman is now under immediate inspiration of God.

An argument has been put forth to show that the prohibition of woman's preaching and praying in public applies only to married women whose husbands are still living. It is ingenious and plausible, and rests largely upon the claim that in the passage cited the word rendered "women" would be translated more correctly "wives," because, among other reasons drawn from the usage of Greek words in other places, of wives only can it be truly said that the man or husband is "the head." But this argument breaks down under the indiscriminate use of the word γυναῖς, for woman and for wife, as well as under the weight of the reasons given for the prohibition, despite the strong effort to show that nature does not teach what the inspired apostle says it does teach as to some of these reasons. It ignores the fact that these reasons bear upon all women of all ages and civilizations alike, because of the further fact that "God in his word contemplates marriage as the proper condition of woman, while he does not make celibacy a crime, and that the sphere he assigns to the unmarried woman is also private and domestic. But, as a triumphant refutation of the whole contention for the subordination of woman and her silence in the churches, it is said, "The law is indeed explicit, but it was local and temporary, and must be taken in its spirit and not literally."

It is claimed that the conditions under which the women of that day

and of whom the apostle wrote lived, rendered them unfit to rule or teach; but the law was not intended to apply to modern Christian women, "lifted as she is by better institutions into an intellectual, moral and literary equality with man. Doubtless, were the apostle now living, he would himself avow this." To hold and teach otherwise, it is said, is insulting and degrading to modern, cultured, refined Christian women.

Now the unanswerable reply to this is that the Holy Spirit and not simply Paul lays down this law, and assigns for it grounds that are of universal application so long as this world lasts. Not one of them is personal, local or temporary. They apply as strongly to educated, pious women of to-day, and just as they did to Phœbe, Priscilla, Damaris, Eunice and Lois, and the women of Corinth in the apostle's day; for they are found in the facts of woman's origin, nature, and the designed end of her creation. The apostle, speaking for the Holy Spirit, does not say that woman must not exercise authority over the man nor preach and pray in public because "he regards her as less pious, less zealous, less eloquent, less learned, less brave, or less intellectual than man. Nowhere does he disparage woman, but shows that his habitual conception of female Christian character in the churches to which he ministered was at least as favorable as his estimate of the male members." (*Dabney.*)

Collate 1 Cor. xi. and xiv. with 1 Tim. ii., and we find that the grounds for this divine legislation are found (1) in the order and design of woman's creation, "for Adam was first formed, then Eve." "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." (2) In woman's relation to the fall. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression;" and (3) in the universal requirements of female modesty and propriety. "It is a shame for woman to speak in the church."

Thus we have sought to present the principal objections against the teachings of the word of God upon the whole subject, and are constrained to conclude that none of them, nor all of them combined, ought to modify the belief that the word of God forbids woman to bear rule and teach and pray in the church.

3. What the Scriptures teach that woman may do in the church.

The faithful application of the law and the principles stated and discussed above ought to settle the question as to what woman may lawfully do in the church. We add therefore only some of the particulars to which that law applies.

(a) That in the privacy of her home, or from house to house, she may teach children, men and women, both in the home and foreign work, but not publicly in chapel or on the street, is sanctioned in Acts xviii. 24-28. There we find that when Aquilla and Priscilla heard Apollos and saw that he had been only partially instructed, "they" (vs. 26) "took him

unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly," not in the synagogue nor on the streets, but privately.

(b) In the Sabbath-school, when rightly constituted and conducted, women as teachers are acting, not independently nor representatively, nor addressing a public assembly, but are directly under the appointment and control of the proper authorities of the church and deal only with their separate classes.

(c) As to singing in the church. The principle underlying the praise of God's house is that of common worship in a set formula of verse and song. It differs from prayer and speaking, in that each of these is a leading by representation in the devout approaches of the church to God, or in speaking for God to the church.

The mingling of the voice in the common service of praise brings into prominence the corporate identity and expression of the church life, in which the individual is swallowed up by the "one body." The Scriptures sanction this in Psalm cxlvii. 1; "Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God: for it is pleasant and praise is comely;" Psalm cxlix. 1, "Sing unto the Lord a new song and his praise in the congregation of saints;" Psalm cl. 6, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." So also in the New Testament, Ephesians v. 19, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord;" Colossians iii. 16, "Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

(d) There is nothing in the principles laid down to prevent concert for prayer by devout women, nor anything to prevent the formation of aid and missionary societies by women in their own church and under the control of the session of that church; but it is questionable, to say the least, whether under the polity of the Presbyterian Church, founded, as it is professed to be, upon the word of God, union societies, presbyterial, synodical, or mixed denominations, are legitimate. Moreover, this doubt is strengthened by the strong and growing tendency in such unions to assume to themselves the work of the church, to throw this zeal and strength outside of authorized channels and to put themselves beyond control, while they absorb the time, energies, prayers and means of many of our best women.

(e) The bearing of all that we have found in the Scriptures as to woman's place, duties and rights in the home and in the church upon her place and rights in the state is strong and direct—the same principle of subordination, the same reasons for preserving the modesty, purity and true womanliness of woman apply and gather strength from the fact that in the rude struggle with man, woman, as the weaker vessel, is sure to suffer most; and, in lowering herself, will lower man instead of lifting him to a higher and nobler life.

Believing, as your committee does, that the questions involved in the whole subject submitted to them by the Synod are of vast and rapidly growing practical importance to the welfare of the home, the church and

the state, we have sought earnestly for the mind of the Spirit in the word of God. That search shows a law of God so explicit in terms and so universal and abiding in the grounds upon which it is based that it can be denied or evaded only by resort to the boldest rationalism or to methods of interpretation, which, if duly pushed, weaken or destroy the authority of the Scriptures as to doctrines and duties, and render uncertain what those doctrines and duties are. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah viii. 20.)

Respectfully submitted,

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