

The Experience and Rationale Regarding Women in Ministry Among Churches of the Arminian-Wesleyan-Pentecostal Tradition

By Eugene F. Durand

Historical Background

Although only about one-third of the churches that belong to the World Council of Churches ordain women, momentum in this direction has accelerated during the past three decades. All of the major denominations, except the Anglicans and the Orthodox, now employ women ministers.

Even in those churches that ordain women, however, some theologians oppose the practice. They hold that women's ordination has no historical precedent in the New Testament or in church tradition and see it as a capitulation to secular feminist pressure.

Given this argument, one might assume that the more evangelical churches have led the way in resisting giving women a leading role. Actually, the opposite is true. Evangelical Christianity, especially in its more revivalistic forms, has given the greatest role to women, being exceeded in this perhaps only by the Quakers and Unitarians.

"Denominations in the National Association of Evangelicals have by and large ordained women earlier, in larger numbers, and more consistently

than those in the National Council of Churches."--Donald W. and Lucille Sider Dayton, "Women As Preachers: Evangelical Precedents," Christianity Today, May 23, 1975.

Influence of Wesley

The emancipation of women in this area may be said to have begun with John Wesley. Better yet, his mother, Susanna Wesley, often called the Mother of Methodism, can rightly be credited with starting a preaching ministry for women. Not content to exercise religious leadership over her ten children alone, she turned her Sunday family worship into an evening service attended by as many as 200 people.

This, of course, made it difficult for John Wesley to deny women an important role in Methodism. He allowed them to serve as local preachers and itinerant ministers, although they were never ordained. Before his time it was unheard of in England for a woman to hold a position in government or the church.

The change did not come easily to Wesley, however. When Mrs. Sarah Crosby spoke to 200 people at her Bible class meeting, he applauded her but requested that she not preach. Her subsequent successful ministry led him to change his mind. After hearing Mrs. Mary Fletcher preach to crowds of 2,000 and 3,000 people, he exhorted her to preach as much as possible. He finally concluded that since "God owns women in the conversion of sinners, who am I that I should withstand God?"

Revivalism in America

When Methodism came in contact with American revivalism and pre-Civil War reform movements its tendency toward giving women full participation in ministry increased. Evangelist Charles Finney included

among his "new measures" in evangelistic methods allowing women to speak in public. Finney's assistant, Theodore Weld, encouraged women to speak, warning, "the devil of dominion over women will be one of the last that will be cast out" of men (ibid.).

At Oberlin College an emphasis on holiness and perfection led to reforms such as abolition, temperance, peace, and "female reform," the latter causing it to become the first co-educational college in the world. Oberlin graduates became some of the leading feminists, and included Antoinette Brown, the first woman to be ordained.

As in the 1960s the civil-rights movement encouraged "women's liberation," so in the 1830s the abolitionist movement was followed by the women's rights movement. Those who used the Bible against slavery found that it could be used against the oppression of women also. They appealed to the "spirit" rather than the "letter" of Scripture, thus opening the way for the full ordination of women.

Phoebe Palmer, Methodist laywoman, evangelist, and editor of Guide to Holiness, proved a major force in the mid-19th century holiness revival. She preached in Canada, the United States, and Britain, claiming 25,000 converts. Her book, The Promise of the Father, a defense of women preachers, furnished the arguments used by countless holiness writings on the right of women to preach. Strangely, she never sought ordination, feeling that no one should be ordained, since all are called to preach the gospel.

During a Phoebe Palmer crusade in England, Catherine Booth, wife of William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, felt called to preach. When opposed in this decision, she responded by writing articles and a pamphlet

defending her right to the pulpit. The Salvation Army declared, "no laws can be good in effect that profess to care for and guard the interest of one sex at the expense of the other" (The Salvation Army: Its Origin and Development [London: Salvation Publishing and Supplies, 1951], p. 63).

Following some debate, the Army admitted women to all ranks, even those giving them authority over men. Catherine and William's daughter Evangeline in 1934 became commanding General of the Army, and as of 1987 another woman holds this supreme post.

Phoebe Palmer also influenced Francis Willard, founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, who in 1888 wrote a book defending the ministry of women.

Wesleyan Methodists began ordaining women in the early 1860s, although the mainline Methodist Church did not do so until 1956. Even the Wesleyans continued to debate the practice until it became relatively common in the early 20th century.

Although the founder of the Free Methodists, B. T. Roberts, argued for the ordination of women in 1891, his church did not adopt the custom until 1974. Women had been preaching in that communion since 1860, however.

Many of the evangelical churches founded around the turn of the century practiced the ordination of women. Seth Rees, founder of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, encouraged his wife, Hulda, to preach. She became known as the Pentecostal Prophetess, preaching from age 16 until her death. Said Seth: "Nothing but jealousy, prejudice, bigotry, and a stingy love for bossing in men have prevented woman's public recognition by the church. No church that is acquainted with the Holy Ghost will object to the public

ministry of women. We know scores of women who can preach the Gospel with a clearness, a power, and an efficiency seldom equalled by men" (D. and L. Dayton, loc. cit.).

The Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), founded in 1881, from the beginning considered women an essential part of its leadership. In 1902, 50 of the church's 200 leaders were women. The Church of the Nazarene at its founding in 1894 included in its constitution the right of women to preach. The first woman they ordained was among their founding delegates. In 1905 some 20 percent of Nazarene ministers were women.

Alma White, who claimed to be the Christian church's first woman bishop, founded a small holiness body around 1900 with headquarters in Zeraphath, New Jersey. She taught that under the old dispensation men served as priests, but after the rending of the veil at the crucifixion both men and women could join the priesthood.

Historical Conclusions

From the above examples we can see that a feminist theme runs throughout holiness literature. These movements that emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit usually grant a greater role to women, believing that the Spirit may choose whom He will for ministry apart from the usual patterns of church recognition, theological training, or other certification.

Strangely, as the momentum for women's ordination has accelerated in more mainline churches in this century, it has declined in the holiness churches, especially since World War II. Whereas 20 percent of its ministers were women in 1908, the Church of the Nazarene reached a figure of only 6 percent in 1973, for example.

As the reform movements during which the holiness movement was born

have faded into history, so has the feminist impulse, with its parallels to slavery. Meanwhile fundamentalism came to the fore and influenced holiness churches toward a more literal interpretation of Scripture on the matter of women's role. With the passage of time, emphasis on Spirit-directed spontaneity settled down into a more institutionalized pattern, causing a movement away from female leadership. Emphasis on a more professional, seminary-trained ministry made it more difficult for women to break into the ranks of ministers. Cultural accommodation in holiness churches since World War II has caused them to look upon the use of women preachers as a strange practice out of harmony with the mainstream.

Rationale for Women in Ministry

What reasons did these Wesleyan-Pentecostal-type churches give for employing and ordaining women ministers? Why were they willing to go against the majority of churches in this respect? We find that the arguments fall into two broad categories: Scriptural and sociological. Not all who produced these reasons argued for ordination; most promoted simply the right of women to preach the gospel, apparently feeling that ordination was superfluous, the call of God being infinitely more important than the approval of men.

As has been noted, the first woman to be ordained was Antoinette Brown in 1853. Oberlin College resisted her request to take the theological course, but allowed her to attend classes without receiving a degree. In 1852 she became pastor of the First Congregational Church in South Butler, New York. Luther Lee, a Wesleyan, preached her ordination sermon, even though Wesleyans did not ordain women for another decade.

Lee chose as his opening text Galatians 3:28, "There is neither male

nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." He understood this to mean that in Christ the sexes become one, that in the church males and females have equal rights and privileges. "I cannot see how the text can be explained so as to exclude females from any right, office, work, privilege, or immunity which males enjoy, hold, or perform," he declared. (These thoughts and all quotations appear in Five Sermons and a Tract by Luther Lee, Holrad House, Chicago, 1975.) "I acknowledge the candidate to be...a sister in Christ; if I deny her the right to exercise her gifts as a Christian minister, I virtually affirm that there is male and female, and that we are not all one in Christ Jesus, by which I shall contradict St. Paul," he added.

Lee believed that to make any distinction between males and females in the church purely on the ground of sex would mean to strike this text from the Bible. "If males may belong to a Christian church, so may females; if male members may vote in the church, so may females; if males may preach the gospel, so may females; and if males may receive ordination by the imposition of hands, or otherwise, so may females." As to why this text has not been applied in general in the churches, he felt that it had been neglected just as many other Bible truths have been.

Restriction of the priesthood to men in Old Testament times, Lee argued, belonged to the abrogated law of Moses. If Galatians 3:28 "does not place males and females upon an equality,...it does not place Jews and Gentiles on an equal footing."

The sermon added other arguments. It pointed out that the Bible mentions a number of women prophets: Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, Isaiah's wife, and others. Joel 2:28 foretold that "your sons and your

daughters shall prophesy." This was fulfilled at Pentecost, when "the women" accompanied the disciples and other brethren in the upper room (Acts 1:12-14) and likewise received the Holy Spirit. "Thus did the Holy Ghost, in his first descent, crown females as well as males, with tongues of fire, to speak the wonderful works of God." Phillip's "four daughters which did prophesy" (Acts 21:9) indicate that "female prophets were not unusual in the Primitive Church." And since to prophesy means to teach or preach, these daughters were actually "four female gospel ministers," and the prophecy of Joel means "your sons and your daughters shall become teachers, or gospel ministers."

Lee asserted that women pastored congregations in the primitive church. He cited Romans 16:1, "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." To him, "servant of the church" expressed an official relation, specifically, preacher, teacher, and minister, since the word diakonos, here translated "servant," is in nearly every other case translated "minister." "Poor Phebe is made a single exception out of twenty-two instances of the use of the word," he noted as he chided the translators of the King James Version for their male chauvinism. "Had it been a man of whom Paul thus wrote, there is not a shadow of doubt that they would have rendered it, 'the minister of the church which is at Cenchrea.'" "So reading as it ought to read, the question of a woman's right to preach the gospel is settled," he declared.

Other female laborers in the gospel mentioned by Paul include Priscilla, Tryphena, Tryposa, and Persis. In addition, he spoke of "those women that labored with me in the gospel" (Phil. 4:3), an obvious reference to preaching the gospel. Women were also "the first persons employed by

Christ, after his resurrection, to tell the story of his triumph over death and the grave."

Difficult Texts

Lee addressed the only two texts that are supposed to forbid women to exercise their gifts in public: "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" (1 Cor. 14:34, 35); and "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" (1 Tim. 2:11, 12).

Were he to say he did not know what they mean, this would not offset the fact that women did prophesy and pray in the church. Therefore they must be explained in harmony with that fact. If the texts are taken as an ironclad rule, then they "must cut females off from all vocal part in public worship." This would include singing and prayer. Such an interpretation clearly puts the verses in conflict with other scriptures that tell of women speaking out for the Lord, as in the cases mentioned above. "Are we to understand Paul as issuing a command, covering all countries and all ages, absolutely requiring all women to keep silence in the churches?"

That the apostle did not mean this, Lee believed, is indicated by his statement in 1 Corinthians 11:5, 13 that "every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoreth her head;....is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?" This passage "gives directions how women are to pray and prophesy in public." Would Paul give directions on

how women were to speak in church and then forbid them to do so?

But what does the apostle mean in his instruction forbidding women to speak? He is not talking about female teachers or preachers, but the entire feminine membership. We must "regard these two texts as local and specific in their application, founded upon some peculiarity in the circumstances of the community at that time and in those places....an exception to the general rule."

Paul refers to the "law" that requires women to render obedience. The law of Moses contains no such statute. He must refer to Genesis 3:16, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

In this case, the law is binding only upon married women, leaving all unmarried women free to speak out. Furthermore, it indicates that married women are to obey their husbands' will, which leaves them free to speak in public if their husbands agree to it. Paul's statement that a woman may not usurp authority over a man must refer to her husband. Therefore she is forbidden only to teach contrary to his wishes.

The apostle obviously directed his command toward a situation involving disorderly conduct. In the Corinthian church all wished to speak at the same time, including the women, who also talked in opposition to their husbands. This violated the law given to Eve, since it involved insubordination. The solution involved commanding either the men or women to keep silence, and Paul chose the latter course, appealing to the Eden decree, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Thus did Luther Lee explain why he felt no hesitation in preaching the first ordination sermon for a woman.

Antoinette Brown did her own exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 and

1 Timothy 2:11, 12 four years before her ordination. By way of introduction, she asked whether there is something intrinsically wrong about a woman teaching in public. If not, it would be her right and even her duty to do so, and no universal rule could prohibit such action. If it is wrong, God Himself could not make it right, and none of the ancient prophetesses were called of the Lord, an unthinkable proposition.

Mrs. Brown's understanding of the passages contrasted with Luther Lee's. She could find no reason why the commands applied only to Corinthian women or those under Timothy's charge. For her, they were universal principles, binding upon all nations in all ages, appropriate to women in the 19th century as much as to those at the dawning of the Christian era. She also differed with Lee in what the passages were saying.

To her way of thinking, Paul did not tell women to keep quiet lest they offend Jews and Gentiles, for both groups were accustomed to prophetesses and priestesses respectively. Hence the command had no basis in mere circumstances. Proper understanding of the verses depends upon understanding the words used, she reasoned.

The word used for "speak" in the Corinthian passage ("it is not permitted unto them to speak") is lalein, meaning "to talk, chatter, babble." For examples, see 1 Tim. 5:13; 1 Cor. 13:11; 2 Cor. 11:17, 21, 23, where the word appears to indicate to be loquacious, prattle, talk unwisely, inconsiderately. If the word means simply to speak, then "all the vocal exercises of the church must be unlawful to females," according to Mrs. Brown.

The situation in Corinth does come under consideration, in that the

members there were recent converts still influenced by former habits and inclined to go to extremes. The women especially, having been liberated from former social bondage by becoming one in Christ Jesus and introduced into a new world of thought and feeling, manifested a zeal not according to knowledge that resulted in disorderly conduct. Hence Paul's rebukes for their noise and confusion and his rules for proper conduct.

But the apostle is not talking about teaching here but the abuse of gifts. Otherwise it would be wrong for a woman to teach under any circumstances. If he forbids women to talk in church, then they may not pray, speak, or even sing. This would contradict Scriptural teaching elsewhere and reduce Paul's counsel to nonsense.

What he does forbid is their asking ill-timed questions or any speaking that would cause confusion. Women were allowed to instruct the church or do "anything else which they had the wisdom and ability to do," reasoned Pastor Brown.

As for the text in Timothy, if the apostle here tells women not to teach in public, then they must not teach in "the Sabbath school, in the social circle, or in the nursery." Indeed she may even be prohibited from teaching her own children. In contrast, what Paul meant was that women must have a quiet, teachable spirit, rather than one of arrogance and self-confidence.

He speaks against usurping authority with a "dictatorial, self-important, overbearing manner of teaching." "In this category we must then place the kind of teaching prohibited by the apostle." Women must not "attempt to teach over man, and usurp authority over him."

Concluded Antoinette Brown, "In what portion of the inspired volume

do we find any commandment forbidding woman to act as a public teacher, provided she has a message worth communicating?" Where is she forbidden to "stand up in the name of her Redeemer, administering the cup of salvation to the lips of dying immortals {sic}?"

The Apostle Paul would not contradict Joel's prophecy, quoted in Acts 2:17, 18, that women would prophesy. Nor would he contradict himself, for in 1 Corinthians 11 he too speaks of women prophesying. And if a final argument was needed, Antoinette Brown pointed out that God created women equal to men.

Phoebe Palmer's Promise

As noted above, Phoebe Palmer was a famous speaker whose preaching and writing influenced other women to follow her example. Her book Promise of the Father presented her reasons for encouraging women to preach.

Going to the Old Testament, she reminded readers that God called Deborah to judge Israel not because there were no men available but because He ordained it, and no one in Israel seems to have objected. The same was true of the prophetess Hulda, for Jeremiah was available, yet Josiah consulted her. Jumping to modern times, Palmer pointed to Queen Victoria as a current example of the same principle.

If we really believe Paul's injunction that women keep silence in church, why do we allow them to speak at all, as in responsive readings, the Lord's prayer, and singing hymns? The apostle's rule served for that Corinthian church only because of their disorderly debates. His reference to women covering their heads when praying or prophesying (1 Cor. 11:5) indicates that he allowed them to do so. He believed they might prophesy without usurping authority over a man.

Mary announced the resurrection and she and the women with her were given a message for the disciples. The Samaritan woman invited her city to come hear Jesus, leading to their conversion.

In addition, women also received the Holy Spirit in the upper room. The prophecy of Joel that daughters would prophesy was fulfilled at Pentecost, but must continue beyond that day to the present.

Both men and women preached the gospel in apostolic times. When Paul wishes that all may prophesy, this includes women. His reference to Tryphena and Tryphosa "who labor in the Lord" (Rom. 16:12) confirms this. If women "prophesied" they also preached, which is the meaning of the word. Women also preached during the early Christian centuries.

Palmer also saw in Psalms 68:11 a text to encourage women preachers. She declared that in Hebrew the verse reads, "Great was the company of women publishers, or women evangelists," the key word being feminine here.

Harking back to Paul, she observed that he believed women ought not to pray with head uncovered. If we do not enforce this, she asked, why enforce what he said regarding their keeping silent? Obviously both were temporary injunctions. How could Paul object to a woman teaching when Priscilla taught him (Acts 18:26)? Furthermore, she believed that Phebe, called a servant or deaconess, was ordained at Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1).

In modern times many of the ministers among the Friends are women, for this organization dares not forbid a woman to preach who has been called of the Lord. There is no respect of persons with God. Tens of thousands more souls could have been won to Christ had women been allowed to exercise the gift of ministry. Present-day women who have exercised this gift prove this to be true. Palmer cited numerous examples of women

used of the Holy Spirit to win souls.

While woman is the "weaker vessel" in physical strength, this does not hold true regarding "mental endowment," "moral courage," or "spiritual attainment." As the crowning act of Creation, she cannot be inferior. Christianity is the only religion that makes women equal to men, she noted.

Finally, she used the favorite text in such arguments, Galatians 3:28, observing that Paul reported that women labored with him in the gospel.

The Salvation Army Speaks Out

The same year that Phoebe Palmer's book appeared (1859), Catherine Booth, wife of Salvation Army founder William Booth, wrote Female Ministry or, Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel. She introduced the argument that women seem by nature fitted for the ministry because of their graceful manner and speech. If a man may leave the tilling of the ground that God assigned him in order to preach, may not a woman leave her kitchen to enter the ministry? Such a move does not make her less feminine, but more so.

As did others, she referred to Joel's prophecy of handmaidens receiving the Spirit for prophecy and its fulfillment at Pentecost. The apostles allowed women to preach, she believed.

Booth asserted that Paul's prohibition in 1 Cor. 14 must harmonize with his permission in the 11th chapter. Hence when he orders silence for women he cannot be making a general prohibition. He refers rather to ignorant talking, questioning, and fault finding, improper speaking, disputations. Curiously, she does not explain why men were not forbidden to do these things.

This book also holds up Phoebe (Rom. 16:1) as a preacher or deacon

rather than a mere servant, since the word means "minister" in other places. Junia is cited from Rom. 16:7 as another gospel worker. It further notes that early Christian fathers such as Justin Martyr, Eusebius, and Irenaeus tell of women preachers in their day.

Booth asks, as does Palmer, why churches insist on verse 24 in 1 Corinthians when they ignore the rest of the chapter. She held that in Timothy Paul was dealing with personal behavior at home. Certainly woman may teach, for only domineering usurping of authority over men is forbidden. Jesus did not rebuke the Samaritan woman for proclaiming Him to her town, nor the women who followed Him to the cross.

If a woman has the gifts and hears the call of the Spirit, the Bible nowhere forbids her to preach. In fact, the preaching of Philip's daughters and others in the New Testament church and Deborah and Hulda in the Old Testament encourage it.

Booth also sees Psalm 68:11 as talking about women evangelists. She points out that Micah 6:4 classes Miriam with Moses and Aaron. In the New Testament we have Anna and the Marys speaking God's word and receiving the Holy Spirit to fit them for this work. Women, such as Priscilla, labored with Paul in the gospel. The favorite Gal. 3:28 is produced again as placing women on an equality with men in preaching. Have women preachers been deceived as to their calling? she asks. They have won many souls, she declares, and produces numerous examples in modern times.

One passage issues the challenge: "If commentators had dealt with the Bible, on other subjects as they have dealt with it on this, taking isolated passages, separated from their explanatory connections, and insisting on a literal interpretation of the words of our version, what

errors and contradictions would have been forced upon the acceptance of the Church, and what terrible results would have accrued to the world."

In another place Booth asserts, "'Let your women keep silence in the Churches' has resulted in more loss to the Church, evil to the world, and dishonour to God, than any of the errors we have already referred to," such as antinomianism and Unitarianism. She asks us to consider "whether God intended woman to bury her talents and influence as she now does? And whether the circumscribed sphere of woman's religious labors may not have something to do with the comparative non-success of the Gospel in these latter days."

Frances Willard Wants Women in the Pulpit

Frances Willard, known for her advocacy of temperance and women's suffrage, in 1889 authored a book titled Women in the Pulpit, in which she argued for a woman's right to preach. While some of her arguments followed those of others, a number of her ideas were unique.

Much of her material consists of quotations. She cites T. DeWitt Talmage's observation that "There is a tenderness and a pathos and a power in woman's voice...which the masculine voice can never reach." Included also is Joseph Cook's contention that women can minister better to women, and that since no one denies a woman's right to preach in print, why not in the pulpit as well? Another quote declares that "we need women commentators to bring out the women's side of the book {the Bible}."

Willard marshalled statistics to show that two-thirds of public school graduates are women, as are two-thirds of the teachers in these schools, nearly three-fourths of all church members, and most Sunday school teachers. In contrast, 90 percent of all prisoners are men!

Citing the oft-used 1 Corinthians 11:5 as evidence that women preached in the early church, she declared, "There are thirty or forty passages in favor of woman's public work for Christ, and only two against it, and these not really so when rightly understood." When Paul told Timothy to commit what he had heard to faithful "men," he meant everyone, including women, just as when he commanded "men" everywhere to repent.

Lest anyone should use creation as an argument against women in the pulpit, Willard contended that woman was created out of better material than man! Furthermore, created last, she stands higher in the order of creation.

The book sets forth the opinion that women's preaching is more practical and compassionate. People flock to hear a woman more than a man. The Devil has kept women from preaching for a purpose. Men's preaching has converted mostly women; shouldn't men have an equal chance at conversion by women preachers? The empty churches would fill up if women preached in them.

If women's home duties have not kept them from becoming successful doctors, why not ministers also? The author quotes an unnamed teacher of theology and Greek who declared, "Women are the natural teachers and preachers of the race." She adds that since women hold nearly every other job in the church, why not let them preach too?

Willard claims that while the New Testament does not say women were ordained, they performed the essential functions of the ministry. Therefore if a woman meets the qualifications required of men for the ministry, she should be accepted. The question involves the rights of women in general. If they can vote, own property, etc., why not preach?

Perhaps the difficulties in the way of literalism may be best set forth in tabulated form, showing the Bible's "it is written again":—

PAUL.	OTHER SCRIPTURES.	PAUL.
<p><i>1 Tim. ii. 11.</i> "But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness."¹</p>	<p><i>Judg. iv. 4, 5.</i> "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. . . . And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment."</p>	<p><i>Gal. iii. 28.</i> "There can be no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus."</p>
<p><i>1 Cor. xiv. 34.</i> "Let the women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak."</p>	<p><i>Joel ii. 28, 29.</i> "And it shall come to pass afterward . . . that your . . . daughters shall prophesy, . . . and upon the handmaids will I pour out my spirit."</p>	<p><i>1 Cor. xi. 5.</i> "But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head."</p>
<p><i>1 Cor. xiv. 35.</i> "It is shameful for a woman to speak in the church."</p>	<p><i>Luke ii. 36-38.</i> "And there was one Anna, a prophetess, . . . which departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."</p>	<p><i>Phil. iv. 3.</i> "I beseech thee also . . . help these women, for they labored with me also in the Gospel."</p>

¹ "I permit not a woman to teach" is a plain declaration. But women constitute more than half the Sunday-school workers of our day. The literalist proves too much by his argument. Perhaps he solaces himself by keeping all the offices in his own hands, for eye-witnesses can testify that not in Sunday-school conventions only, but in the great national conventions of public school teachers, where nine thousand women assemble, and less than one thousand men, the latter, under the subjection theory, into which they were drilled from the beginning, proceed to distribute the positions of "honor and profit" almost wholly among themselves. These things would be grotesque to look upon if they were not so sad, and laughable if they did not, in the minds of thoughtful women, fatigue indignation and exhaust pity.

PAUL.	OTHER SCRIPTURES.	PAUL.
<p><i>1 Tim. ii. 11.</i> "Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection."</p>	<p><i>Acts xviii. 26.</i> "Apollos . . . began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully." [This seems to have been the first theological school.]</p>	<p><i>Rom. xvi. 3, 4.</i> "Salute Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, . . . unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."</p>
<p><i>1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.</i> "Let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything let them ask their own husbands at home."</p>	<p><i>Acts xxi. 9, 10.</i> "Now this man [Philip the Evangelist] had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. And as we tarried there many days" [<i>i. e.</i>, Paul and his company].</p>	<p><i>1 Cor. xi. 11.</i> "Howbeit neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God."</p>
<p><i>1 Cor. xi. 3.</i> "The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."</p> <p><i>Eph. v. 23.</i> "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is head of the church."</p>	<p><i>John i. 1, 3.</i> "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made."</p> <p><i>John xiv. 9.</i> "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."</p> <p><i>Col. ii. 9.</i> "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."</p> <p><i>John x. 30.</i> "I and the Father are one."</p>	<p><i>Rom. xvi. 1.</i> "I commend unto you Phœbe our sister, who is a servant¹ of the church that is at Cenchrea." [The Epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth, and sent by Phœbe. The greatest of Epistles was carried from Corinth to Rome by a woman, a journey involving a sea-voyage, and a visit to a foreign country.]</p>

¹ The word "servant" is more justly translated deaconess, or *ministra*. We find that Pliny writes (A.D. 104) that he selected two females, "who were called ministræ, ministresses," for torture, to extract information against Christians. Prophetesses is equivalent to preacheresses.

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Take the descent and confusion, as of 1 Cor., and it had been therein have rung with soul of woman? behavior of men doctrine for man basis of a binding ence to the conduct

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 'Twixt T

¹ Mosheim, in his ment: "Every church parts: First, teachers ernment of the community ministers of each sex He also says: "The church its very first rise, a class sex, and who were tenent commentator La was formed quite as much of the synagogue."

Paul says a woman may not teach, but we let them teach anyway, so why forbid preaching?

The fact that two-thirds of church members are women indicates their higher spiritual nature. Woman's subordination to man results from sin, not creation, and is not the ideal any more than thorns and thistles! Christ restored what Adam lost, including woman's equality. She quotes a leading minister: "To apply this 'keep silence' to women now, and thus bury their talents by apostolic law, is an insult to them and to Paul, and a sin against God." In fact, Paul names 12 or 14 women whom he recognized as ordained ministers or deacons, according to a woman preacher cited by Willard.

Catherine Booth is cited to the effect that there is nothing unnatural or immodest about a woman in the pulpit. God told man to till the ground. If he may leave that work to preach, why may not a woman leave her usual work to do the same?

Two pages of this book contain a chart showing how what Paul says against women speaking in church is more than counterbalanced by other Scriptures and even Paul himself. (See accompanying copies.)

Roberts' Rules of Church Order

Two years after Frances Willard's book appeared, Free Methodist B. T. Roberts came out with his volume on Ordaining Women in 1891. He argued that the Church for centuries misinterpreted what the Bible teaches regarding slavery, and had done the same with women's rights. Nothing in the nature of ordination indicates that no woman should ever be ordained. If God calls her, the Church may ordain her, he believed.

That woman was created last proves her superiority rather than

inferiority, since creation moved toward a climax. Therefore if man is the head, she is the crown, having been created from man (not dust), hence being once further removed from the earth. Created as his equal, she received dominion with him, as one also in God's image. While she was the first to fall, she was first in restoration, since Christ became the seed of the woman.

When Christ spoke on divorce in Matthew 19:4, he harked back to Eden, adding nothing regarding woman's subjection.

Roberts further noted that while only men served as priests in the Old Testament, prophets ranked above priests, and women were prophets. In answer to the question as to why Christ did not choose a woman among the twelve disciples, the author posed his own questions: Why did He not choose a gentile? May only Jews be ministers? Based on Galatians 3:28, if "Greeks" may be ministers, why not "females"? This is the key text on the subject, he declared, hence all other texts must agree with it. If it refers only to equality in salvation, women would not be mentioned, since it was taken for granted they could be saved (Acts 5:14). Therefore it must refer to rights and priveleges.

In explaining the Pauline passages in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy against women speaking in public, Roberts pointed out that no church applies these texts literally, else women could not sing, pray, testify, or teach in the Sabbath school or elsewhere. He felt that Paul did not forbid women to preach in these passages, and refered as had others to the apostle's allowing women to prophesy in public if their heads were covered (1 Cor. 11:5), and to his mention of women who labored with him in the Lord. He stated that the Corinthian reference was to disorder and

confusion rather than to woman's right to preach, "your women" indicating a local situation. When a woman is authorized to teach, she is not "usurping authority" over a man.

If women are not capable of pastoring, we need no laws to keep them from it. If men can do it better, women will lose out to the competition. But women have demonstrated their ability in this area.

Harking back to Bible times, the author noted that there were other apostles besides the twelve, among them Junia (Rom. 16:7). On Ps. 68:11, he quoted Adam Clarke's literal translation: "Of the female preachers there was a great host." Women prophets were also preachers, he explained. Likewise, deacons were preachers and ministers, and Phebe was one of these (Rom. 16:1). In 1 Timothy 3:11, he believed "wives" should be translated "women," since "their" does not appear in the original. Hence Paul writes not about wives of deacons but of women deacons, who were ordained, as many commentators agree. "The New Testament gives to the Church ample authority to ordain women for the work of the ministry," Roberts concluded, for deaconesses did the work of the ministry the same as deacons.

If women were allowed to do their part, the gospel would go faster. Why should they be satisfied with less in light of Matthew 28:19, 20? If they are qualified, they should be ordained. And if they are not allowed to baptize, they should not be allowed to make converts. Either stop her work or allow her to complete it, he challenged. Don't separate what God has joined. "It is unjust to invite a woman to become a worker in the Church, and then, whatever may be her qualifications, her abilities and her success, forever exclude her by arbitrary enactments from its higher ministries," Roberts observed in a rather prophetic view of the present

Adventist dilemma.

He felt that women are more spiritual than men, that they have a special gift for teaching, are more practical, sensible, and lack no courage or scholastic ability.

In 1 Timothy 5:2 ("the elder women") the author saw a reference to women elders in the church. Women have demonstrated administrative ability, as in the case of queens. They were ministers during the early, pure age of the church, but were set aside when the church became rich and popular, he observed.

In his concluding chapter 17, Roberts stated: "In the preceding pages the following propositions have been clearly proved.

"1. Man and woman were created equal, each possessing the same rights and privileges as the other.

"2. At the fall, woman, because she was first in the transgression, was, as a punishment, made subject to her husband.

"3. Christ re-enacted the primitive law and restored the original relation of equality of the sexes.

"4. The objections to the equality of man and woman in the Christian Church, based upon the Bible, rest upon a wrong translation of some passages and a misinterpretation of others.

"The objections drawn from woman's nature are fully overthrown by undisputed facts.

"5. In the New Testament church, woman, as well as man, filled the office of Apostle, Prophet, Deacon or preacher, and Pastor. There is not the slightest evidence that the functions of any of these offices, when filled by a woman, were different from what they were when filled by a man.

"6. Woman took a part in governing the Apostolic church.

"We come, then, to this final CONCLUSION; THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, IN THE PROVISIONS WHICH IT MAKES, AND IN THE AGENCIES WHICH IT EMPLOYS, FOR THE SALVATION OF MANKIND, KNOWS NO DISTINCTION OF RACE, CONDITION, OR SEX, THEREFORE NO PERSON EVIDENTLY CALLED OF GOD TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY, AND DULY QUALIFIED FOR IT, SHOULD BE REFUSED ORDINATION ON ACCOUNT OF RACE, CONDITION, OR SEX."

Fannie Hunter's Women Preachers

In 1905 Nazarene Fannie McDowell Hunter wrote a volume on Women Preachers in which she repeated many of the arguments in favor of them already used by others, with a few new angles of her own.

She appealed to the popular Psalm 68:11 in the Revised Version: "The Lord giveth the word: The women that publish the tidings are a great host," adding that Adam Clarke renders the original Hebrew as, "Of female preachers there was a great host." (Perhaps we should note that the SDA Bible Commentary says this text probably refers to companies of women singers such as celebrated great events, as the return of victorious armies--1 Sam. 18:6, 7; Ex. 15:20, 21, and here alludes to the conquest of Canaan in Psalm 68:11-14.)

Adam Clarke is again cited as believing that Isaiah 40:9 should read, "O daughter, that bringest glad tidings to Zion," say, "Behold your God!" Thus the author finds here a divine invitation to women to preach the good news.

In the Old Testament "prophetess" means "female preachers," according to Robert Young of concordance fame, since prophets did more preaching than foretelling. Hunter then names five O.T. prophetesses as

examples, noting also that women ministered at the tabernacle (Ex. 38:8, RV, margin; Num. 8:24).

As to the fact that there were no women priests in Israel, the author contends that the priests represented Christ and their work ended with Him. There were no priests in the New Testament church. Christian ministers correspond to Levites and prophets, both positions being open to women. A prophetess ranks higher than a priest, anyway, so God bestowed the highest office in His church upon women.

In the New Testament, Anna the prophetess became the first to preach Jesus as the Messiah. A woman first preached Jesus to the Samaritans (John 4:28) in public and to men! Jesus never said women couldn't preach. In fact, they were the first to announce His resurrection, being sent by the Master to "go and tell."

Hunter declares that of the 120 in the upper room, 105 were women. The only ones who were not were the 11 disciples and the four brothers of Jesus (Acts 1:14), she explains. These all received the Holy Spirit, fitting them to speak for God.

Women Preachers finds another argument in Acts 8:3, where Saul put "men and women" in prison, while others "went everywhere preaching the word." According to Acts 18:24-26, Priscilla taught Paul the Word. She must have known his views on women's rights! "Phoebe,...a servant" (Rom. 16:1-5) was really a deaconess, and deacons in Methodism are ordained preachers; therefore she must have been an ordained preacher. One Dr. Godbey translates the passage "Phoebe...a minister," since the word "servant" is so translated 16 out of 20 times in Paul's writings. The only time it is rendered "servant" is here, the KJV translators obviously being

prejudiced against women! In the New Testament female deacons did the same work as male deacons, as far as we know, and Philip and Stephen preached. In Romans 16:7 Junia is referred to as an "apostle."

Hunter's view of 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 is that it refers only to a local situation where women were causing confusion, hence was a temporary command. "The apostle did not rebuke those women because they had made an effort to teach or preach, but for their effort to learn." In chapter 11:5, 6 Paul allows women to prophesy. As for 1 Timothy 2:11, 12, it does not refer to preaching or speaking in church, but only to usurping authority, she explains. Galatians 3:28 leaves a woman free to serve Christ in any position to which she may be called.

Man and woman received joint dominion at creation. She became subject to man only as a punishment for her sin. But Christ redeemed her from the curse of the law, restoring the original equality. Christ said nothing about the subjection of women.

Joel predicted that "sons and daughters" would prophesy. And so they have done from the early days of Methodism, beginning with Susanna Wesley. They have also done so among the Friends or Quakers for more than 200 years. The Salvation Army has 5,000 women preachers.

In her concluding chapter, Fannie Hunter appeals to reason. "If she has freedom to engage in secular employment, why not allow her freedom to engage her time and talents in telling the story of Jesus and His love?" Woman was first in transgression. "If she, under the influence of the Evil One, could do so much damage, why not allow her, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to do all she can to rescue us from the curse? Dr. Adam Clarke said: 'An ass reprov'd Balaam, a cock reprov'd Peter, and why not a

woman reprove sin?" It is well known that women have "done more to advance the cause of temperance in the last twenty-five years than the men had done in a hundred years previous."

"Since woman owes her elevation to Christianity, may she show her appreciation by rallying around the Cross." The author quotes Phebe Palmer: "When I consecrated myself to God, my lips and voice were included," then adds her own appeal: "'Rise up ye women,' and do the bidding of your Master, although some of His disciples may become indignant and say: 'To what purpose is this waste?' Let Jesus reply to them: 'Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.'" "Women preachers will adopt the glorious motto given by Peter: 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'"

Bushnell's Word on Women

In God's Word to Women, Katharine C. Bushnell sought to place Paul's statement on women in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 in proper perspective. This advice, she explained, was not meant to control all women for all time. One must take into account the historical setting. In those days women were kept in their place by both pagans and Jews. Therefore, for them to do otherwise than Paul suggested would have brought needless persecution upon them and the church. At other times in his ministry the apostle did not forbid women to teach men, only at this especially perilous time.

Paul's "Let the women keep silence" must harmonize with the precedent set by Jesus in letting women speak in public in His presence and the apostle's own words elsewhere.

Bushnell argued that Eve's female offspring should not suffer for her sin more than her male offspring. Christ atoned for all sin, hers

included.

The author claimed that the Bible contains sex bias in its translation, which of course was all done by men. To insist that women not preach is to handle the Word of God deceitfully, she concluded.

Conclusion

One cannot but be impressed by the quantity and quality of arguments marshalled in favor of women in the ministry. Many of them are difficult to answer on the part of those opposed to such a ministry. At the same time one must admit that some of these arguments are weak, even to the point of appearing somewhat ridiculous. This of course does not invalidate the worthy arguments, anymore than weak arguments for the Sabbath invalidate that doctrine.

This is not to say that women in ministry is as clearly taught in the Bible as the Sabbath. It is not. The points in its favor are more in the nature of deductions than commands. Reasoning and logic are summoned in its favor rather than proof texts. One must constantly ask, Is this argument valid? Logic and reason being subjective matters, yes and no answers on the same point may be equally divided.

Actually the churches studied in this enquiry do not depend for guidance as heavily on Scripture as on the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit has told a woman that she should preach, who is man that he should deny her this calling? Thus the Spirit may speak today in addition to his speaking through the Bible, these churches believe, and they must be attentive to His voice.

Furthermore, the proof of the pudding is in the eating: if women have proven themselves capable of preaching and winning souls, does this

not constitute evidence of God's blessing and enabling? Many cases are cited to show that they have indeed passed this test.

Finally, one notices that most of these defenders of woman's right to preach do not argue for ordination, but only for allowing her to do the work of the ministry. The conclusion that women have a right to ordination seems to be either taken for granted or deemed unimportant.