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## FEMALE PREACHERS.

"The first woman in the Methodist denomination to pass through a full and regular course of study, from church history to Hebrew, in a theological school, is said to be Miss Mary A. Phillips, now in her second year at Garrett Biblical Institute. She will graduate in May next, successfully mastering the three years' course in two years. The faculty will graduate her 'like a man,' and she expects to pass into pulpit work. She is the daughter of a Methodist clergyman of Olney, Ill."—*Raleigh Christian Advocate of Feb. 19th.*

"The Rev. Mrs. Maggie Newton Van Cott will preach to-morrow morning at the Methodist church, on —— street, and at night, at the Methodist on —— street."—*New York Herald, Saturday.*

These announcements taken in connection with the minority report favoring Female suffrage, signed by two grave Senators, during the present session of Congress, deserve more than a passing notice. They indicate a radical change in all our social and political relations, as well as a revolution in our religious customs and institutions. They are the mutterings of an approaching storm, that had its beginning more than thirty years ago, and has already wrought widespread ruin in the extended tract it has passed over. This storm is approaching the South, and it would be unwise in us to close our eyes to its progress, or fail to warn the people of God against its dangers.

The question for every disciple of Christ to answer for himself is this, Do the Scriptures allow women to preach the gospel in public assemblies? If it can be found anywhere in the New Testament that women were commissioned to preach or allowed to preach in the public assemblies, then they have the same right to preach that Paul, Fuller, or Whitfield had, and the churches of Christ have been in error in prohibiting females from preaching, for all the centuries of the christian era. For nearly two thousand years the churches, both Greek, Roman Catholic and Protestant, have with a strange and almost unbroken uniformity refused to allow women to preach the gospel.

This remarkable unity of opinion on this subject can be accounted for only on the plain meaning and unmistakable import of the Scriptures that refer in any way to it. It is only within the present century, a period remarkable for its changes and revolutions both in the moral and religious, as well as in the political world, that this new doctrine has found expression or set forth its claims to religious tolerance.

*Baptist churches* have never, in any age, allowed women to preach, or in any way, assume the office and functions of the christian ministry. From the beginning till now, Baptists have held closely to the written word of God; believing that God has committed to them the keeping of His Word, in its purity and authority, and the keeping of its ordinances, just as Christ delivered them. Neither persecutions, nor fines, nor imprisonments, nor poverty, nor reproach, nor shame, have ever been able to cause them to omit or fail of keeping one jot or tittle of Christ's law. Submitting to the supreme authority of the Scriptures as the word of God, and following, with full and absolute submission its teachings, Baptists have always, as now, with one accord, believed and held that women were not permitted by the Scriptures to preach the gospel in the public assemblies of God's people. They have not stopped to ask why women are prohibited from preaching? Nor whether it would be expedient and to the interest of Christ's kingdom that they should be allowed to preach. Baptists are directed by Christ's commands, not by *expediency*, and they have ever been willing to believe that Christ knew what instrumentalities were best to use in the accomplishment of His purposes. We no more ask why God has prohibited *women from preaching?* than we ask why He did not commission *angels to preach?* His will, His law, His plans are submitted to and followed without a question, and without a murmur. "Speak Lord thy servant heareth," is the soul utterance of every true disciple of Jesus Christ.

With these views of God's sovereignty, and the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures, Baptists have ever been a peculiar people, and their religion, the plain religion of the New Testament Scriptures, has ever been a *strange religion*. If Baptists could be enabled to find in the law of Christ that sprinkling would do for baptism, all of them would be sprinkled henceforth and forever hereafter. And if Baptists could find anywhere in the New Testament that women were authorized to preach the Gospel, they would ask readily, even more readily than others, ordain and set apart female preachers of the Word. But instead of finding such authority in the New Testament, we honestly believe in the sight of God, and with no prejudice to the rights and privileges of any, male or female, that the Scriptures prohibit women from preaching.

In I. Corinthians 14th chapter and 34th and 35th verses we have these words, "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 any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." Again in Paul's first letter to Timothy 2nd chapter and 11th and 12th verses, we read: "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 be in silence." And in connection with this positive prohibition, Paul gives the reason why women under the new dispensation are not allowed to be leaders and preachers. "For," says he, "Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

No man who believes in the inspiration of the Scriptures can fail to see in these plain teachings of the New Testament that women are forbidden to preach in the churches, and are excluded from the public ministry of the gospel. We are aware that, owing to the pressure of public sentiment, one or two learned and useful Baptist preachers have lately attempted to explain away the teaching of Paul on this subject. They go to the original Greek and the ancient manuscripts, the convenient arsenals of error and corruption, and tell us, that the Apostle intended to say "that women should not be permitted to gabber as monkeys in the churches." Honest, unbiased, christians believe that Paul meant exactly what he said. And all right minded, christian women in the churches have unhesitatingly admitted the authority and the wisdom of the Law here given.

If the translators of our Bible so far misunderstood the apostle in this instance—how are we to know that they correctly translated any other verse of the Scriptures? If Paul was *inspired* when he wrote these words, when was he *inspired?* If these texts of Scripture mean nothing, why may not the whole volume of inspired writings be a jargon of nonsense or a cunningly devised riddle, meaning nothing and teaching nothing?

The events of history and the record of mighty changes in politics and religion have an absorbing interest to one who feels concerned for his country or his race. The origin of the now prevalent semi-infidel views of Scripture, with all the wide tide of isms and evils, these views have led to, will yet form a chapter in the history of the decay and ruin of the religious denominations. "Thirty years ago," says Mr. Beecher in a sermon on the 'Lack of a Public conscience,' "Our religion and politics were one and the same thing." He is speaking with reference to the New England States. Then it was that the people of that section became absorbed in the abolition of slavery. Pulpits rang with charges and denunciations against the one curse and sin tolerated by the Bible and the Constitution, till all other evils and sins were forgotten or condoned. Willing, panting fanatics loudly denounced both the Bible and the Constitution till good meaning men, deemed it expedient to so translate and interpret the Scriptures as to get rid of all such words and ideas as slave and slavery. This to all appearance saved the Bible, and continued it in its place, as the great source of all authority and wisdom. But it was readily discovered by other extremists, that the same rules of translation and interpretation that had been so readily used by the pious and learned preachers in relieving the Scriptures of the taint, or tolerating slavery, could be used to get rid of all other objectionable teachings, precepts and commands. The Temperance fanatics loudly rejected every sentence in the Bible that by possibility could be construed into countenancing the use of wine or strong drink. One of these learned preachers only last year, tried to explain away the miracle of Cana, boldly and blasphemously declared that if Christ performed the miracle of turning water into wine and gave wine to his guests, he did not sanction any thing like the use of intoxicating wine by his disciples, and