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A SURVEY OF
VIEWPOINTS ON THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN
TO THE PROTESTANT MINISTRY

By
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INTRODUCTION

A SURVEY OF VIEWPOINTS ON
THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN TO THE
PROTESTANT MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Explained.

The specific aim of this thesis is to present a survey of the varying viewpoints on the ordination of women in the Protestant ministry, with the purpose of discovering the positive and negative aspects of the question, and the reasons presented for each point of view. This study will include a survey of representative denominational stands, current literature on the subject, and the interpretation of relevant Scripture passages.

2. The Subject Justified.

Such a study on the ordination of women in the Protestant ministry seems vitally important in light of the widely varying and largely unverified ideas and viewpoints among Christians today. This study will contribute:

a. An indication of current thought trends, as seen in present-day literature and denominational action;

b. A background of study available to those who are interested in knowing the logical arguments, the

verified reasons of any particular type of viewpoint;

c. Source material for those who desire to know something of all attitudes and the reasons for them before they make up their own minds as to their personal opinion;

d. Help to any young women interested in church work, to know the church doors which are, at the present time, open or shut in the matter of accepting women ministers; and

e. Aid to ministers, teachers, and other Christian workers in places of authority and/or counseling on current problems.

3. The Subject Delimited.

The present-day survey in chapter one will be limited to twenty-one Protestant churches: the eleven major denominations with membership of over one million, as listed in the World Almanac, 1949, and ten representative minor denominations, two each of the five groups studied in Clark's book on The Small Sects in America.

The literary field to be scanned in chapter two will be limited to the past decade, 1940-1950. It will include magazine articles, news items, books, pamphlets and all other printed material exclusive of denominational literature or Biblical commentaries.

Chapter three will include interpretations of only those Scripture passages which are directly relevant

to the question of the ministry of women, as indicated by various churches and current writers in the reasons given for their viewpoints. The attitude and point of view of Jesus will not be treated in detail, but rather the unity of Biblical inspiration and the consistency of New Testament writers with the spirit of Christ will be taken as fact. The teachings of Paul, for example, presuppose the views of Jesus.

B. Sources of Study

In chapter one the sources of study will be letters and releases from the above-mentioned church denominations, with reference material found in church reports and histories.

The bibliography of chapter two will include books, magazine articles, news items and pamphlets written and published during the last decade.

The material used in chapter three will be taken from the leading commentaries on the New Testament, including primarily those books suggested in the Princeton Theological Seminary Bibliography of Bible Study for Theological Students, which is widely regarded as complete and authoritative. Those writers who most clearly and fully express their exegetical treatment and interpretation of the Scriptural passages in question will be quoted. Brief reference will be made to other Biblical commentators.

C. Method of Procedure

The method of approach in this study of a feminine ministry will be that of a general survey, with tabulation of results, comparison and contrast of viewpoints, and a discovery of the trend of attitude as a whole. There will be the classification of types of reasons for the various attitudes. The type of literature in the survey of current books, magazine articles, etc. will be examined, and the purpose for writing.

There will be the attempt to be completely objective and fundamentally impartial in presenting the various viewpoints honestly and fully with no personal reference or bias in favor of any particular point of view.

CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF VIEWPOINTS OF PROTESTANT
CHURCHES ON THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF VIEWPOINTS OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES ON THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

A. Introduction

The Protestant churches of present-day Christianity have varying attitudes toward the question of the preaching ministry and the ordination of women. In order to know the viewpoints of particular denominations and also of the Christian Church as a whole, a survey will be made of twenty-one churches.

Eleven of these constitute the major denominations in the United States--those church groups with membership of over one million, as stated in the World Almanac, 1949. These are the Congregational Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Methodist Church, National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., National Baptist Convention of America, Northern Baptist Convention, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Protestant Episcopal Church, Southern Baptist Convention, and the United Lutheran Church in America.

The other ten churches are representative of the minor denominations, with two chosen from each of the five types of churches listed in Clark's book, on The Small Sects in America. An attempt has been made carefully to

select those churches of differing doctrinal and organizational persuasion, so that they will accurately present a cross-section of denominational life and thought in the United States. These churches are: Group I, the Pessimistic or Adventist Sects--Church of God (Oregon, Illinois), Seventh Day Adventists; Group II, the Perfectionist or Subjectivist Sects--Free Methodist, Church of the Nazarene; Group III, the Charismatic or Pentecostal Sects--Church of God (World Headquarters), Pentecostal Holiness Group; Group IV, Communist Sects--Christian Catholic, Hutterites; Group V, Legalistic or Objectivistic Sects--Free-Will Baptists, Reformed Episcopal Church.

Letters have been written to each of these churches requesting an official statement on the stand of the denomination in regard to this controversial point of women ministers. Five points have been covered in questions asked in these letters:

1. The official denominational stand on the ministry of women;
2. The reasons for this denominational attitude;
3. The conferences, council meetings, etc., which discussed the subject;
4. Church literature published on the subject, and
5. Number of women ministers in church, if any. Name and address of one.¹

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1. A copy of one of these letters is included in the Appendix.

Church year books, the minutes of general assemblies and special councils, as well as other literature suggested in the denomination's answer to question number four, have been carefully studied for information.

The group of major churches and their decisions and points of view will be treated first, under the two-fold division of negative and positive attitudes toward the ordination of women. Secondly, the same two types of stands within the minor churches will be studied. Contrasts and comparisons, both within the small groups and between the major and minor denominations as a whole will be made. The results will be tabulated, and the trend of current attitude as a whole discovered.

B. Major Denominations

Six of the major denominations studied in this survey do not ordain women, although the church viewpoint on the matter differs somewhat.

1. Negative Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

a. The Protestant Episcopal Church.

This church has one of the most completely negative attitudes on this question of a female ministry. In a survey by Cavert on the work of women in American church life, this church viewpoint was clearly revealed. This group does not encourage and seldom allows the active participation of its women in any church offices. In

some dioceses women are allowed to serve on local church boards, in others they are not permitted to do so. One woman was seated as a representative in the highest denominational body in 1946. This has been the only instance of such an occurrence, however, and the question would have to be raised again before such an act could be allowed again.¹

Church histories, conference minutes, and year books agree with the above information, making no provision for women ministers or lesser workers, with the exception of a women's lay missionary organization and religious communities for meditation and works of mercy.

b. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri.

The viewpoint of this group is also very negative. The women in this Lutheran Church are not allowed to be representatives on the local church boards or the synods. They, of course, are not permitted to be ministers, either officially or practically.² It is felt that such practices are not Scriptural and not in keeping with the general tradition of the Church.

c. The United Lutheran Church in America.

This Lutheran group, while still on the negative side as far as the ordination of women is concerned, is yet more liberal in its viewpoint of the work of women

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1. Inez M. Cavert: Women in American Church Life, p. 91.
2. Ibid., p. 89.

in general. The answer to the letter sent to the church included the report of the committee on Women as Congressional Representatives in 1930. The question raised at that time was

whether women can be granted all the rights of lay-members in our Churches without violation of the teaching of Holy Scripture: or whether the teachings of the Scriptures compel to withhold from them certain rights that are enjoyed by laymen.¹

The problem was not that of ordaining the women, for the unanimous church answer on that would be negative. This statement was made:

If the question before us were that of ordaining women to the ministry and placing them in charge of the public worship of the church, the committee would have to agree. . . that such a practice is expressly forbidden. . . this has been the understanding of the universal Church for almost nineteen hundred years.²

The question was rather that of the election and seating of women as delegates in the synodical conventions. The findings of the committee were that such representation by the women was not unscriptural. According to the decision made in 1936, as a result of this report, women are granted the right to serve in the highest denominational body as well as on the church boards.³

There has been no official church action denying

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1. Committee report on Women as Congressional Representatives, p. 1.
2. Ibid., p. 2.
3. Cavert, op. cit., p. 8.

to women the right to preach; rather it is taken for granted that such action is prohibited. There are no women ministers.¹

d. The Southern Baptist Convention.

In the official reply to the letter sent to this denomination concerning church views on the ordination of women, the type of government of the Baptist churches was mentioned:

Baptist churches are independent, self-governing organizations. The churches can and do co-operate in the work of large groups of Baptists, such as district associations, state conventions, and the Southern Baptist Convention, but these denominational bodies have no control over the churches and therefore can make no rules governing the churches. There is no such thing as a Baptist church governing a large territory like a county, state, or a nation.²

Thus the matter of woman's activity in the church is decided by the local church. However, the representative writing this letter says:

I have had wide acquaintance with the churches cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention and I have never known a church co-operating with the Convention that ever ordained a woman to the official position of pastor.³

Cavert writes in agreement with this statement. Women are allowed representation in the large conventions, but are not permitted to take office in any of the local

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1. Marjorie De Huete: Official letter from denominational headquarters.
2. Austin Crouch: Official letter from denominational headquarters, p. 1.
3. Cavert, op. cit., p. 87.

church boards or to become ministers.¹

However, women are not excluded completely from local service, but sometimes serve on local temporary committees. Crouch writes:

The women belonging to Southern Baptist Churches have all the rights and privileges of men who are not officially ordained. Women serve on the various committees in the church. To illustrate: The church to which I belong is planning to move its location and build a new building. There are women on the committee that has this matter in charge.²

Concerning the matter of larger representation, Crouch continues:

Women are sent by the churches as messengers to the various denominational bodies such as state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention and they serve on various boards and committees of these organizations.³

In the Southern Baptist Handbook, there is a large section containing items of world interest, of religious interest, and of special Baptist interest. None of these items concern the work of women except the brief mention of the Women's Missionary Union.⁴

The reason for the negative attitude toward the ministry of women was briefly discussed in the official letter.

It is not necessary for me to go into a full discussion as to why our Southern Baptist churches do not ordain women to become pastors. It is enough to say that we do not find any authority

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1. Cavert, op. cit., p. 87.
2. Crouch, op. cit., p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 2.
4. Porter Routh: Southern Baptist Handbook.

in the New Testament for the ordination of women to the gospel ministry. Such passages as the following evidently exclude women from such office.

'A bishop then must be. . . the husband of one wife. .' (I Timothy 3:2-5).
'If any be blameless, the husband of one wife. .' (Titus 1:6).¹

Obviously a woman cannot have a wife, so she cannot be a bishop or leader of a church.

e. The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc.

This Baptist group is similar in viewpoint to the one mentioned above. The women are not ordained or licensed as ministers, although they are allowed representation in the general convention. Also, they are permitted to serve on local church boards and committees.²

No reasons have been made available as to the basis for the denominational attitude, but it may be supposed that the church does not feel that the ordination of women is in keeping with New Testament teaching.

f. Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

As the official statement of the church reads, "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America does not ordain women to the gospel ministry."³ The presbyteries defeated an overture on this subject in 1930. The General Assembly of the church re-submitted the question

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1. Crouch, op. cit., pp. 1,2.
2. Cavert, op. cit., p. 87.
3. Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Official letter from denominational headquarters, p. 1.

of the ordination of women ministers in 1946, when it was again voted down, although by a slightly narrower margin than the former year.

According to the report by Cavert:

The arguments against it in Presbyterian discussions seemed usually to be based on sex prejudice or on the theory that a married woman could not do the work required. Biblical and theological arguments were not heavily stressed, though the most conservative group in the church undoubtedly considers it un-Biblical.¹

This Presbyterian group allows its women freedom in serving on local, state and national boards and committees, although this usually is expressed in the Women's Presbyterian Association rather than in general church affairs.² Women, however, are permitted to serve as ruling elders in the church.³

2. Positive Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

a. American Baptist Convention.

It is somewhat difficult to know in which category to place this Baptist group, since information concerning the denominational viewpoint on the ordination of women is contradictory. The report by Cavert made in 1948 indicates that women are not licensed or ordained in this church.⁴ However, the information in the 1951

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1. Cavert, op. cit., p. 69. See also World Council of Churches Interim Report, p. 38.
2. Ibid., p. 90.
3. Ibid., p. 87.
4. Ibid.

year book and in the official letter received from the denominational headquarters states the opposite opinion. Perhaps the difference may be explained in time lapse between the earlier report and the actual situation in 1951.

Nelson writes concerning this matter of the ordination of women:

Our Convention as such has no ordination rules. These rules appear rather within state convention areas and are very general in nature. There are no rules prohibiting the ordination of women. . . . Our policy is based as far as possible upon the simplicity of the New Testament. Our churches feel that if a group of messengers from the churches within an area, usually the Association, feel led to ordain a candidate, that such action is entirely in keeping with the New Testament teachings.¹

The American Baptist year book for 1951 lists 8100 ministers, with thirty-five of these women.² Nelson writes mentioning certain ordained women who are doing great work in the Middle West and the West. He says about the denominational record and practice:

We do not have a great many ordained women, not because they have been prohibited but because the practical aspect of the minister's duties generally seem difficult for women to carry out at some points. I must say however that many of them do carry on under very difficult circumstances. . . . I do not have statistics as to the number of ordained women.³

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1. Reuben E. Nelson: Official letter from denominational headquarters.
2. American Baptist Church Yearbook, 1951.
3. Nelson, op. cit., p. 1.

On the matter of literature on the subject, Nelson writes that "there is no special literature on the subject of ordination of women. Participation of women in all of our work is so taken for granted that there is no special mention of it."¹

b. The Methodist Church.

In the "Daily Advocate" for May 3, 1944, the Committee on Ministry reported on the equal and full clergy rights for women. These reports were voted on and accepted, and the new discipline was changed to read, "Women are included in all provisions both for the local and traveling ministry."² Before this they were included only in provisions for the local ministry.

The Methodist Church does ordain women, and the largest number of ordained women in the better known denominations are undoubtedly Methodists, although the total is not known. The Methodist women are ordained as local deacons and local elders, and may serve as accepted supply pastors, but cannot be members of a Conference.³ They perform all the functions of the minister. But since they are not members of Conference they have no right to a church or to a pension. The present tendency on the part of Methodist officials seems to be to

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1. Ibid., p. 1.
2. Daily Advocate, May 3, 1944, p. 109.
3. Cavert, op. cit., p. 90.

regard women local preachers as "ordained lay women. . . in no sense ministers." Yet a large number have proved their right to the latter title. There were about 200 Methodist women serving as "supply pastors" according to a report to the 1948 General Conference.¹

The arguments most often heard against full clergy rights are the difficulty of moving married women from one church to another and the fear of a "flood" of women whom the churches would not accept.²

c. Northern Baptist Convention.

This Baptist group gives women recognition and opportunity to serve on local and regional boards, and also ordains them to the active ministry. There were reported to be thirty-eight Northern Baptist women pastors in 1947.³ The Convention feels that the Scriptures mention active women in church work, directed by the Holy Spirit. And women today, who also are guided by the Spirit and approved by the church, can be free to work and serve as ministers.

d. International Convention of Disciples of Christ.

The official report from the denominational headquarters stated that the general attitude of the

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1. G. Bromley Oxnam: Letter from denominational headquarters.
2. Cavert, op. cit., p. 70.
3. Cavert, op. cit., p. 70.

church on the question of the ordination of women is overwhelmingly positive. Cook writes:

About the only negative attitude to be found is custom. The churches would probably agree almost 100% as to the status of ordained women ministers, but many of these same churches would hesitate to call a woman, mostly because the work of the ministry has been traditionally performed by men.¹

The basis for the denominational viewpoint is summed up thus in this same report:

From the New Testament standpoint, the Disciples of Christ would support the position that 'in Christ there is neither male nor female.' They would probably consider Paul's statement 'that women should keep silent in the church' as Paul's own personal opinion and not as anything binding upon the church as such. The Disciples would magnify all of the recognition which Jesus gave to women as His personal servants. From the practical point of view, the acceptance or rejection of a woman minister would depend somewhat on the answer given in the preceding paragraph, and whether or not the woman minister under consideration would have the proper qualifications of voice, personality and effective leadership qualities. In other words, this would be a matter of the usual qualifications for the ministry rather than sex.²

According to Cavert, there were reported to be about 283 women in the Disciples' directory of ministers, but only thirty-nine were pastors.³ The 1951 yearbook lists 3820 ministers in regular work, with at least twenty-five of them women.⁴ There are 202 Religious Education

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1. Gaines M. Cook: Letter from denominational headquarters, p. 1.
2. Ibid., p. 1.
3. Cavert, op. cit., p. 70.
4. This last figure is approximate and is based on the denominational letter.

directors, 104 of them women. There are 229 pastor's helpers, 181 of them are women. There are seventy-six singing evangelists and helpers, forty of them are women.

e. Congregational Christian Church.

The women of this denominational group are given freedom to serve in official capacities and are ordained into the active ministry. According to Cavert,

There were about 175 ordained Congregational women ministers in 1946. Of these 23 were in charge of churches. Ten ordained women from other denominations and 22 licentiates and students were also serving as pastors. Some were assistant pastors or directors of religious education. In the last three or four years there has been a decided increase in the number of Congregational women ordained but very few of these are in the pastorate, it seems.¹

A more recent study reports 233 ordained or licensed Congregational Christian women ministers. Of these eighty-four are pastors.²

C. Minor Denominations

1. Negative Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

a. Reformed Episcopal Church.

This denomination allows its women to serve on local and regional boards and committees, but does not ordain them to the active ministry.³ Concerning official

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1. Cavert, op. cit., p. 70.
2. Congregational Christian Church: Yearbook, 1951.
3. Cavert, op. cit., p. 91.

church action on the matter of women ministers, Herter writes:

Our General Council Journals, our Synodical Council Journals, and our historical files record no action on the question. It seems never to have been an issue.¹

b. Christian Catholic Church.

This group, centered in Zion City, Illinois, professes to have no creed but the Bible, and thus no written doctrine or discipline. However, those pamphlets and books which express the general beliefs and practices of the church reveal no mention of the ordination of women.² There are no rules or ordinances prohibiting them, but, as in the case of the Reformed Episcopal Church, it seems never to have been an issue. It is taken as custom that men will control and govern the church. The only exception to this was the ordination of the founder's wife, Mrs. Jane Dowie, as church overseer (comparable to minister in other denominations).³

c. Hutterian Brethren.

The Hutterites are a very conservative group of Mennonites who do not allow their women any official

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1. Theophilus J. Herter: Letter from denominational headquarters.
2. M. J. Mintern: The City of Zion in Leaves of Healing, Vol. 86, p. 32; also John Dowie: The Principles, Practices, and Purposes of the Christian Catholic Church; Harlan Rolvix: John Alexander Dowie and the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion.
3. John Dowie, op. cit., inside back cover.

representation either in local or regional capacity. They, of course, then, do not ordain or license women.¹ No specific reasons are given except that they do not believe it to be approved or practiced in New Testament times.

d. General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists

Robison writes in a letter from the denominational headquarters: "The Seventh-Day Adventist church does not ordain women to the gospel ministry. We do not have an official statement denying them such ordination, but it is not our practice."²

The reasons given for this negative standpoint are not very clear or detailed. The most lengthy statement is found in the above-mentioned report, which reads:

You ask for reasons of our viewpoint. I do not know that I could give any definite reasons as we have no official action but following the New Testament counsel we have not ordained our women as we find no place in the New Testament where such a practice was followed.³

Women in this group are active in other capacities, such as members of local and denominational boards and committees.⁴ Also, as Robison writes, "The Seventh-Day Adventist denomination has since its organization employed women as Bible instructors, church school teachers, Sabbath school workers, and in many other capacities in

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1. Cavert, op. cit., pp. 89-90.
2. J. I. Robison: Official letter from denominational headquarters, p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 1.
4. Cavert, op. cit., p. 87.

our medical, publishing and office work."¹

2. Positive Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

a. National Bible Institution, Inc.

This Church of God group from Oregon, Illinois, is one of the minor denominations which ordain women.

Watkins writes concerning the church viewpoint:

Officially our church accepts women as ordained Christian ministers. It is not so easy to define our practical attitude. While we have nothing against women ministers our church medium is not conducive to their nurture and development. It would seem that they do not attain to an equal influence and prestige among our churches. For this reason their number is few and they are not too active or successful except in Sunday School and vacation Bible School work.²

There are only three recognized women ministers in the church at the present time. A tract was included in the church official report on the "Position of Women in the Church," which is an attempt to promote interest and banish a lukewarm attitude or undefinable apathy toward the work of women ministers.

Watkins says of the basis for the denominational stand:

We have never clearly defined our Scriptural attitude on the question of women, however there must be a shadow of prejudice against their work. There appears to be a growing opportunity for women in our work since the creation of co-educational college work some eleven years ago.

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1. Robison, op. cit., p. 1.
2. Watkins: Official letter from denominational headquarters, p. 1.

My own explanation of the prejudice is a usual sex antagonism toward the part of women on the part of male leaders.¹

The tract mentioned above explained the local customs which made the instructions given by Paul in I Corinthians and I Timothy natural, and yet not inhibitive of women's work in the church under different conditions.

b. Church of God (World Headquarters).

Another Church of God group reports in favor of women ministers. This church, however, is different in that the women preach in practice as well as in theory. According to Tomilson in the church official report:

The Church of God first introduced women on a large scale in the ministry. On account of this perhaps a third of the more than hundred thousand ministers we have sent forth have been women, starting in 1903, and down to the present time.²

The figures given by Tomilson are for the entire Church of God movement, but the percentage is true of this particular branch of it also. Cavert reports that the Church of God, World Headquarters, has 400 women licensed to preach, about one-third of its total number of ministers.³

These women, while licensed, are not ordained,

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1. Ibid., p. 1.
2. Homer A. Tomilson: Official letter from denominational headquarters, p. 1.
3. Cavert, op. cit., p. 70.

but preach or teach under the supervision of authorized church officials. They may serve as pastors, school teachers, missionaries, etc. They may not administer baptism, the Lord's Supper or Washing the Disciples' Feet, participate in ordination of others, or perform the marriage ceremony. They are licentiates, renewable yearly. Exceptions to this are the considerable number of women of the movement, coming into great strength, who have gone out independently, ordained themselves, and who ordain and baptize others. These are locally important but not among the strongest.¹

The Scriptural basis for the denominational attitude is given by Tomilson:

We count it that the Woman at the Well, Mary Magdalene, the daughters of Philip, Phoebe, servant of the church at Cenchrea, gives Biblical support for all this. Also, the word of Peter, that the Spirit would be poured out on the handmaidens, and they would prophecy.²

c. Free-Will Baptist Church.

The official denominational report states that "no national stand has been taken for or against the ordination of women. There are some ordained women in some states."³

There are about a dozen women ministers at the present time. A great many of the male ministers and

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1. Tomilson, op. cit., p. 1.

2. Ibid., p. 1.

3. Free-Will Baptist Church: Official letter from denominational headquarters.

church leaders are opposed and prejudiced against the idea, but others are satisfied for some women to be ordained. The church attitude seems to be one of permission in general but acceptance or rejection according to the local feeling.

d. Pentecostal Holiness Group.

In the 1949 yearbook of this church reports by both men and women evangelists and pastors are included in the regular pastor's reports. Women delegates were present at the General Conference in large number. Women were active on all committees, and both present and speaking in the Conference. These women are listed as both licensed and ordained ministers.¹

The leadership and activity of women in the Pentecostal Holiness church seems to be taken for granted, and the practical and Scriptural basis for the ordination of women is assumed in the denominational attitude.

e. Free Methodist Church.

An official report from this church says of its attitude toward women in the ministry, "The contest over ordination of women was held long ago! The outcome evidently is a compromise."² This compromise consists in the fact that "the F.M. Church ordains women as Deacons

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1. Pentecostal Holiness Church: Yearbook, 1949.
2. M.B.: Letter from denominational headquarters, February 2, 1951.

but not as Elders."¹ Elaboration of this fact is given in the Free Methodist Discipline:

When a woman holding an evangelist's or local preacher's license is recommended by the quarterly conference as a suitable person to be received into the annual conference, she may be received on probation and into full membership and be ordained a deacon, on the same condition that we receive men into the same relations; provided always that this ordination of women shall not be regarded as a step toward ordination as an elder, and provided, further, that no woman whose husband is a member of an annual conference. . . shall be eligible to be received into the conference.²

The right to be licensed and ordained is given, according to this Church, to "any brother or sister in good standing in our church, being called of God to this work. . . upon recommendation of the society."³

A book of systematic theology used in the Free Methodist colleges as clearly outlining their church beliefs includes a section on the "Position of Women in the Church." This section cites eighty-one Scripture verses as the basis for its attitude toward the ordination of women. These include those mentioning the viewpoint of Jesus and Paul, those which are biographical, and those emphasizing Christian doctrine and practice.⁴

The women in the Free Methodist Church are

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1. Ibid.
2. Free Methodist Discipline, paragraph 120.
3. Ibid., paragraph 166.
4. Amos Binney and Daniel Steele: Binney's Theological Compend, pp. 192-195.

encouraged to serve on local church and denominational committees and boards, although the male members of such groups are in the majority.

f. Church of the Nazarene.

Women in this denomination are also permitted to serve on local church boards and in the highest church body. They are allowed ordination on the grounds that it is Scripturally encouraged and was practiced in the early Christian Church.¹

D. Summary

This chapter has included a survey of the viewpoints of twenty-one Protestant churches on the subject of the ordination of women. There are five points which are revealed in a study of the denominational attitudes of representative churches in the United States:

1. The viewpoints of the various churches have been roughly classified into those which are negative and positive. Of the twenty-one churches studied, six of the major churches and four of the minor denominations are negative, making a total of ten groups which do not favor the ordination of women. The remaining eleven churches, five of the major denominations and six of the smaller groups, may be identified with the positive attitude toward

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1. Cavert, op. cit., p. 88.

women ministers. Of the latter group, however, one of the churches, the Church of God (World Headquarters), does not completely ordain women but licenses them under the supervision of male leaders. Two of the churches, Methodist and Free Methodist, ordain women as deacons but not as elders.

The public work or representation of any kind of women in the churches in the United States differs widely. Of those groups studied, two allow women to serve on local church committees and boards, one permits them to serve in the highest denominational body, fifteen allow them to do both, while three permit them neither type of representation.

In a summary of a study made by Cavert in 1948, the following totals were given for denominations in the United States:

Of 105 denominations for which information could be secured denominational law and practice in 71 permit women to serve on all local church boards, but in 33 they do not. In one it varies by dioceses. In 110 denominations 75 permit women to serve in the highest denominational body, 35 do not. Forty-one denominations ordain women ministers, seven license but do not ordain them, and 63 do neither.¹

2. The percentage of women ministers in relation to male ministers and the number of ordained women with pastorates varies greatly among the churches. The highest

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1. Cavert, op. cit., p. 91.

representation is seen in the Church of God (World Headquarters),¹ where one-third of its ministers are women, 400 out of 1200. The next highest is probably the Pentecostal Holiness Group, although the exact figures are not known. The American Baptists report in 1951 8100 ministers, of which 35 are women. The Methodist Church had 200 women in 1948 who were serving as supply pastors. The disciples of Christ yearbook for 1951 reports 3820 ministers, with 283 of them women, although only about one-eighth of that number hold pastorates. The Congregational Christian Church in 1946 reported 175 ordained women, with twenty-three in pastoral work. The 1951 report shows an increase to 233 women ministers with eighty-four in the pastorate. The Northern Baptists had thirty-eight female ministers in 1947. The Free-Will Baptist Church reports twelve ordained women. The lowest number of women ministers is reported by the National Bible Institution, Inc., which has 3 in 1951.

3. The reasons given by the various denominations were for the most part very general, without extended reference to New Testament or practical considerations. On the negative side, four of the churches felt that the work or ordination of women ministers was unscriptural,

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1. These percentages hold true also for the entire Church of God movement.

three mentioned that it was untraditional, and one admitted sex prejudice. Two more were against the practice of feminine ordination because there was in the Bible no specific authority commanding it nor any definite mention of such practice in the early Church. The reasons given for the ordination of women were primarily that it was in keeping with the spirit and practice of the New Testament. Mention was made of outstanding women in the Scriptures who held positions of Christian leadership. Four of the Churches studied in this survey gave no particular reasons for their viewpoint.

4. This survey reveals that while most individuals hold decided opinions, yet the denominations themselves are responsible for very little definite propaganda. In the official reports from the twenty-one churches to whom letters were sent, only three answered question four¹ in the positive, and mentioned actual denominational literature or action on the subject. The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., is the only group in the past decade which has had any publicity on its viewpoint and decision on the question of the ordination of women in the ministry. Two churches state that this has never been an issue in their denominations: the Reformed Episcopal Church has taken

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1. Question four asked for listing of any church literature published on the subject of the ministry or ordination of women.

for granted the prohibition of women ministers, while the Pentecostal Holiness Group has accepted as a matter of course the leadership of women in the church.

5. There is an appreciable difference between the theoretical freedom of women to preach, and the actual opportunities to serve in a pastorate. For example, in 1947 about 283 names could be recognized as women's in the directory of ministers of the Disciples of Christ, but only 39 were pastors.¹ Some churches even though they do not prohibit a female ministry yet discourage it for practical reasons. Some are concerned lest if women become pastors, the men will leave the church entirely and it will become simply a woman's organization. Others speak of the difficulty of moving married women or of the fear of a "flood" of women whom the churches would not accept. A second group of churches, on the contrary, encourages the full participation of women in the ministry. The National Bible Institution, Inc., for example, has written a pamphlet on "The Position of Women in the Church," which is an attempt to promote interest and banish a lukewarm attitude or undefinable apathy toward the work of women ministers. Other churches are more neutral in their active attitude toward the full realization of the permission of women to preach. Yet they, too, realize the great difference

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1. Cavert, op. cit., p. 70.

between theory and practice. This is variously attributed to habits of tradition, sex antagonism and local feeling.

CHAPTER II

A SURVEY OF VIEWPOINTS IN CURRENT LITERATURE
ON THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

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A. Introduction

Someone has written that the present-day "market-place" where meet the thoughts, customs, influence and actions of mankind, is the printed word.¹ Thus a survey of literature written in the past few years is necessary in order to "feel the pulse" of modern thinking on the subject of the ordination of women in the Protestant ministry.

The type of literature studied for this survey includes books (exclusive of Biblical commentaries²), magazine articles, news items, pamphlets, and any other printed material exclusive also of denominational conference reports.³ The field to be scanned will be limited to the past decade, 1940-1950. Any literature written in languages other than English will not be treated.

The list of printed material has been taken largely from the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature,

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1. John Campbell: Sermon preached in Seattle, Washington, 1947.
2. The subject of Biblical commentaries will be treated in chapter three.
3. The subject of denominational attitudes including conferences and reports was treated in chapter one.

the Cumulative Book Index, and the card catalogues of Union Theological Seminary, The Biblical Seminary, Shelton College, and the Public Library, all of New York City.

The attitudes toward the ordination of women in the different types of literature will be studied separately; then contrast, comparison and coordination of ideas and reasons will be made.

B. Magazine and Newspaper Articles

There are two main literary styles prominent in the magazine and newspaper articles surveyed. One type is biographical or autobiographical, the story of a particular woman minister. The other is non-biographical, that of a report concerning various attitudes or actions on the controversial question of the pastoral ordination of women.

1. Biographical Literature.

a. Harriet-Louise Patterson writes of her life and work in an article entitled, "I Am a Woman Minister" in the August issue of the Woman's Home Companion. For six years she has been an ordained clergywoman of the Disciples of Christ Church. The first three years she served as ad interim minister for middle western congregations. Then she took the pastorate of the Community Church of Chesterland, Ohio.

Concerning the validity of ordaining women ministers, she gives these three reasons:

1. Women are succeeding in nearly every profession formerly monopolized by men;
2. It is insulting to the intelligence of women as a whole to say they'll not accept exhortation to live the Christian life from members of their own sex;
3. Prohibiting the work of women ministers is often depriving churches of good trained leadership.

Miss Patterson has found that "the objections of some authorities just don't hold water." She

soon discovered that the average congregation had no deep-seated prejudices against women preachers. People everywhere. . . were hungry for the old Gospel of hope and salvation, whether it came from the lips of a man or a woman.

Since Miss Patterson has been in the leadership of the Chesterland Community Church, she has been busy cleaning, painting, helping the people remove the church debt and put money in the bank. Church attendance has been doubled, and the people have grown spiritually.

She sums up her attitude on the subject this way:

There are many women in this country who could meet the requirements and who would unquestionably like to prepare themselves for the pulpit if their denominations only permitted them to do so. To exclude them is both unjust and intolerant.

For almost 2000 years the Christian ministry has been carried on by men only. They have not succeeded in giving us a truly Christian civilization. Perhaps it is time to let women have a

hand at the most important task in the world.

Miss Patterson's attitude toward the Biblical viewpoint is that Jesus never forbade any woman to proclaim her Christian faith. Rather He treated all women with great respect and honor, and in the case of the Samaritan woman and Mary Magdalene, He commanded them to go and speak.¹

b. Similar in attitude and content to the above article is the write-up in the Christian Advocate for February, 1951, on the life and work of Josephine Huffer. However, the author does not mention Mrs. Huffer's ideas or personal vindication of herself as a woman clergywoman.

Mrs. Huffer has been pastor of Shelbyville, Indiana's Trinity Methodist Church for the past twenty-seven years. The article describes her success here in all fields of ministerial service. Although the church was at first the "post nobody wanted. . . a tiny frame building badly in need of repair, surrounded by weeds and ramshackle houses," Mrs. Huffer soon worked with the people in building a new, "well-designed, English-type building." Numerical growth was seen, beginning with a revival meeting she held during her first year at Shelbyville. The author writes:

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1. Harriet-Louise Patterson: "I Am a Woman Minister," in Woman's Home Companion, August, 1947, pp. 4, 123, 132.

For two weeks she preached each night until she was hoarse and tired, then during the days she visited those who had been won. As the session went on, the church became more and more crowded, and by the last night there were people sitting on the sides of pews and on window ledges. From then on, her congregation increased steadily, growing from its original membership of 75 to today's congregation of more than 600 members.

In the early thirites, Shelbyville residents were in need of food and clothes, and the author describes Mrs. Huffer's work of encouraging her parish members to give a whole beef, chickens, canned goods, clothes, "a whole houseful of renovated furniture" and other necessities.

Concerning this woman minister's influence in town affairs, the article continues:

Long interested in education, Josephine Huffer has always taken an active part in school affairs. . . Residents marveled when Josephine Huffer sent her three children to DePauw University, then listened more intently when she emphasized college education in her high-school commencement addresses. Within a few years, the high school had several alumni in college, and each year the percentage has increased.

The parsonage has known gay times as well as bad. It served as headquarters for young people's discussion groups and class parties, and the ping-pong table in the basement was often in use.

In conclusion, the writer sums up the present life of Mrs. Huffer. She is

still one of the busiest persons in town. She

still conducts three services a week at Trinity, and manages all her affairs without a secretary. As a member of a Methodist board of youth education she also travels widely, visiting the 69 churches in her district. When friends ask her how she can work so tirelessly, she replies quietly, 'Oh, I don't do it alone. You see, God is always with me.'¹

c. An extensive article with many photographs appeared in the November, 1950, Redbook magazine, describing the work and fame of Miss Kathryn Kuhlman. She is different from the others mentioned previously, in that she is a healer as well as a preacher. She is spoken of as

a woman who works with dedicated zeal up to twenty hours a day to bring her own kind of religion to untold thousands. From every State in the Union and from Christian countries throughout the world, as many as 3,000 people come to her Sunday services at Faith Temple in Franklin, Pennsylvania. . . . For her weekly services at Carnegie Hall on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, crowds of up to 4,000 often begin gathering the night before to be sure of hearing her speak. And for a half-hour, five mornings a week, seven radio stations. . . . carry her voice to. . . . Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio in a program whose audience is exceeded only by those of the top newscasts.

The author and her assistants began their research on the work of Miss Kuhlman in order to discover if she fitted into the category of miracle worker, mass psychologist, hypnotist or charlatan. According to their own testimony,

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1. Betty J. Lane: "The Lady of Fair Street," in Christian Advocate, February, 1951, pp. 5-6.

If they erred, it was on the side of skepticism. But as they questioned and studied, the editor's original incredulity gave way to a conviction that the facts demanded publication.

Dr. Gaius Slosser, Presbyterian minister and professor at Western Theological Seminary, has this to say:

Through the centuries there have occasionally occurred outstanding geniuses in the field of the spirit. Miss Kuhlman is one of these.

Her mission, according to her own testimony, has been to "help those who are hungry for Christ to find Him." "The main theme of all her sermons," writes the author of the article, "is Faith." Concerning the origin of her healing services, this is written:

Four-and-a-half years ago, in Franklin, people began coming to her after services, claiming they had been spontaneously healed. As the number of these healings increased over a period of time into the hundreds, Kathryn began to preach on the subject of healing through Faith. She began to hold occasional 'Miracle' services, and so many healings occurred that she decided more services of this type were needed.

One of the greatest tributes to Miss Kuhlman was given by a minister, who wrote to her:

Among my parishioners are those whose whole lives have been changed by your inspired faith. Many haven't been to church in years. You have opened their hearts, and now they never miss a Sunday.

The question which was asked in the beginning concerning the real nature of Miss Kuhlman's work is answered at the conclusion of the article:

Is Kathryn Kuhlman, then, a miracle worker? Only in the sense that she has brought thousands of people into a sort of awed and almost reluctant

faith.

Is she curing the sick through faith? No sharp and final answer to this question exists. . . . In any event, it is abundantly clear that she is giving to thousands of her followers a peace of mind and a sense of well-being which they have never before experienced. .

Perhaps, too the greatest miracle of all is that in a great metropolis, in the middle of the 20th Century and the beginning of the Atomic Age, a slip of a girl has at least emulated the master revivalists from Charles Finney to Billy Sunday. In the final appraisal of time, that should be enough to make her efforts memorable, and her good works immortal.¹

2. Non-Biographical Literature.

a. Four of the articles in this group deal with the action taken on the problem by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., when the question of the ordination of women was being voted on by the Church.

(1.) In Newsweek for June 10, 1946, the following preliminary statement led the way for further discussion in later issues: "The General Assembly. . . paved the way for the ordination of women to the Presbyterian ministry. This must be approved by a 2/3 majority of the assemblies' 268 presbyteries."²

(2.) In the Newsweek magazine for March 24, 1947, a more complete treatment of the question was given

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1. Emily G. Neal: "Can Faith in God Heal the Sick?" in Redbook, November, 1950, pp. 28-31, 93-96.
2. In Newsweek, June 10, 1946, p. 82.

in an article entitled, "Ladies of the Cloth." Mention is made of a February 16 sermon by Dr. John H. McComb, New York Presbyterian minister, who commented on the 1946 proposition that the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. ordain women to the ministry.

The negative and positive views of the problem which were discussed on March 10 in the New York Presbytery were given in brief. For the negative side, Rev. Lyman Hartley had strong objections. It was scripturally wrong. Also,

the idea of women ministers would encourage celibacy unless there was a 'husband with a lace apron' to do the chores. 'Besides,' he added, 'Can you imagine a musical moment while the pastor powders her nose?'

For the positive side, Rev. George Duff said, "Women have invaded such fields as law and medicine, and will not be denied the call of God into the ministry."¹

(3.) In an article for the New York Times magazine for April 13, 1947, Rev. Lyman Hartley expresses himself in a way somewhat contradictory to the ideas ascribed to him in the previous article. He wrote the day before the New York Presbytery was to vote on the ordination of women, the month before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was to decide by vote of

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1. "Ladies of the Cloth," in Newsweek, March 24, 1947, p. 80.

its 276 presbyteries whether women shall be ordained as regular bishops and pastors.

Rev. Hartley sets before the reader both the negative and positive viewpoints which are commonly held. On the negative side he states the following reasons:

(a.) Women's emotional balance is not as stable as men's. The world needs not overemotionalism, but rather restrained and accurate teaching.

(b.) There is the problem of childbirth for women.

(c.) There is feminine overbalance in average congregations already. "Women pastors will so feminize the church that men would frequent it in even smaller numbers. Neither men nor women will take advice from a woman."

(d.) Women are unable to keep confidences.

(e.) The Scriptural admonition in I Timothy 2:11,12, forbids it.

On the positive side, Hartley presents the following ideas:

(a.) Women have in a short time of greater freedom taken their place by men in fields where emotional balance and discretion are prime considerations. It is an insult to her whole species to say that a woman cannot keep a confidence as well as a man, say both men and women of the affirmative.

(b.) Of course there are physical difficulties in connection with motherhood, but these are gradually being overcome as in the case of school teachers.

(c.) As for feminine overbalance,

it might be that a few attractive personalities with goodness and eloquence plus personal charm would attract many more than now attend.

(d.) There is a strong point made by those who say that God combines the virtues of both mother and father.

(e.) In using Biblical bases for our attitudes, "we must distinguish between timeless truth and local admonition. Again and again Jesus brought the commands of Moses up to date."

(f.) It is not good to have male pastors visiting housewives in the daytime. Women ministers can do so with propriety. They are most helpful in good counseling.

(g.) Women excel in their sympathy in time of illness or emergency.

The author of this article is personally on the positive side, and believes that women eventually will have religious freedom in pastoral work. Now they are like the negroes and the underprivileged migrants.¹

(4.) A fourth article deals with this same event, the voting of the problem of the ordination of women in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. "Woman's Place,"

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1. Lyman Hartley: "Women as Ministers: The Pros and Cons," in New York Times magazine, April 13, 1947, pp. 19, 59.

a write-up in the June 9, 1947, Newsweek, treats this subject briefly, and gives the final decision of the church:

For 50 years Presbyterian leaders have been debating the controversial issue: Shall women be ordained ministers?... The General Assembly voted once again to continue barring women from the pulpit.¹

b. Three of the articles included in this section of non-biographical reports on the ordination of women in the Christian Church, are concerned chiefly with the report by the Federal Council of Churches on "Women's Status in Protestant Churches," published in November, 1940.

(1.) Time magazine in its article, "Women in the Church" in the December 2, 1940 issue, quotes as the center of the survey this statement: "'There are probably more restrictions--legal or traditional--attaching to women in the Christian Church than in any other field in this country.'"

According to the article, this report was based on a questionnaire sent to 5380 active churchwomen of eight denominations (Northern Baptist, Congregational-Christian, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, United Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker).

The problem was raised concerning the reason why, when the majority of church congregations in the United

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1. "Woman's Place," in Newsweek, June 9, 1947, p. 91.

States are made up of women, the churches are still run by the men.

Nearly three-fourths of the women answering the questionnaire wanted women to serve on church boards and have more representation. A few thought this should be done only when there is a shortage of men. One-sixth of those questioned were definitely negative in their attitude. The latter group's reasons, as quoted in the Time article, were two-fold:

'tradition (said a Baptist: "positively undignified and altogether unsuitable"), and feeling: idea that the Lord's supper would mean less if administered by a woman.'

The article concludes:

Wherever Christianity has spread since the days of Jesus, it has raised the status of woman in civil life, but it has kept her in her ecclesiastical place. Even professional women rarely are allowed to do more than sew, serve suppers and teach Sunday School. Wrote one Disciple: 'The world has claimed the brains of our brilliant women. The church was too slow.' ¹

(2.) Newsweek in its December 2, 1940, issue also carried a report of the Federal Council survey, entitled "Sex-Equality." Much of the material covered and some of the quotations used in the preceding article are duplicated in this one.

Reference is also made to implications and practices in the churches even when the rules or head governing

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1. "Women in the Church," article in Time, December 2, 1940.

bodies do not forbid the ordination of women:

Some women have 'broken into the male stronghold of the ministry. . . But ordination doesn't tell the whole story, for most congregations spurn female preachers. Of the Disciples' 254 women ministers, for example, only about 35 have pastorates. Typical of the average congregation's attitude, an old member (male) once turned thumbs down on a well-qualified woman candidate with the remark: 'I'd rather have a man that wa'n't so good.'¹

(3.) The Christian Century for December 11, 1949, writes also concerning this survey by the Federal Council of Churches. It quotes further statements from the survey:

'The American church is still one of the most backward of all institutions in the place it accords to women and the attitude it exhibits toward them. . . Equality of women is recognized in theory in most secular relationships of American life. But in churches what slight advance toward affording women fair share of administrative responsibility has been painfully slow and fought at every step.'

The author of the article comments upon the results of the survey and expresses the need for consecrated thinking:

The church has not lived up to its own standards, and has therefore handicapped its work. There is a deep need for joint planning of church life so that both men and women think through together this matter of equality of the sexes. What does the Christian principle of reverence for personality require? Does it not imply a complementary division of function compatible with biological differences which insures that without competition or invidious distinctions men and women cooperate in the church to build

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1. "Sex Equality," article in Newsweek, December 2, 1940, p. 44.

the kingdom of God? Such an approach. . . should be widely extended. No tradition or prejudice that prevents any major section of the community from making to the kingdom of God the maximum contribution of which it is capable should be tolerated in the Christian Church.¹

c. Three more magazine and newspaper articles deal with the question of the ordination of women as studied by the World Council of Churches.

(1.) The first of these articles is from News-week, March 29, 1948, and is entitled "Women." It centers about a report made by Mrs. Samuel McCrea Cavert, educator and wife of the general secretary of the Federal Council of Churches, who prepared this survey for the World Council.

She wrote that "'the ideas of the Reformation and the dissolution of the convents. . . had a great deal to do with relegating women to the 'ladies' aid' type of church worker.'" Her conclusions, according to the article,

were a fascinating collection of facts about women's place in their churches and how they feel they can contribute more to religious life . . . The largest amount of information came in on professional church activities. Women want more religious training and hope to have a bigger say-so in church policies. Salaries are pitifully inadequate, pensions practically non-existent, so that women shy away from even minor posts. . . The question of women clergy is constantly becoming more pressing.

All of the fifty-eight national reports collected by Mrs. Cavert emphasized that women foreign missionaries

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1. "Women in the Church," editorial in Christian Century, Dec. 11, 1940, pp. 1542-1543.

have done the most to raise the status of women in the Church. The author writes:

At the last count in 1938, there were 27,500 non-Roman missionaries, of whom 9,000 were women lay workers and 7,500 wives, making 16,500 women against 11,000 men in the field.¹

(2.) During the month of August, 1948, the World Council met in Amsterdam, Holland, and one of the topics discussed was the place of women in the Christian Church. The New York Times carried an article on this subject entitled "Woman's Status in Church Studied" in the August 28 issue.

According to the write-up:

the status of women in the Christian Church, particularly their right to full ordination in the Protestant ministry, may become one of the most controversial subjects confronting the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

The special committees on the Life and Work of Women in the Church had closed sessions under the direction of Miss Sarah Chakko of India. The result was "great divergence of opinion within the committees." The tendency was noted everywhere for increasing numbers of full-time professional women workers as pastors, religious teachers, religious editors, executives in church agencies, and mission doctors and nurses.²

(3.) An editorial in the November 30, 1949,

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1. "Women," article in Newsweek, March 29, 1948, p. 74.
2. "Women's Status in the Church Studied," in the New York Times, August 28, 1948, p. 17.

Christian Century is entitled "To Advance Study of Women in Church." The author writes that Amsterdam placed the question of the relation of women to the work of the churches on its agenda, and debated it at length. The outcome was the authorization of further continuation of study of the subject.

Mention was made of the study made by Mrs. Cavert at the request of the World Council of Churches, which was done with the cooperation of the church people of more than fifty countries. The fact that the new survey was not just arranged to postpone action was emphasized.

The personnel in this survey committee includes Sarah Chakko, president of Isabella Thoburn College in Lucknow, India, and secretary of the council's permanent commission on women's work. According to this article:

In forensic exchanges with Karl Barth and the Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as in other ways, Miss Chakko has demonstrated the right of women to disregard the Pauline injunction that they keep silence in the churches.

The results of this new study will be brought together by Kathleen Bliss, former editor of the Christian News-Letter of London--one of the most creative minds in contemporary Christianity. Her chief interest in life is her family, then theology. The author writes: "The association of these two women in this enterprise should warn ecclesiastical anti-feminists that the 1953 World

Council of Churches may be their undoing."¹

d. The International Journal of Religious Education conducted a Symposium on "Men and Women in the Church" in the March, 1940, issue. The question was this:

Is the trend toward strong separate organizations for men and women or toward 'liquidating' them in the interests of the church itself? Or is the trend best expressed by a national men's work secretary, 'I certainly am for men and women having organizations, but cooperating, as Kingdom builders should, in all their efforts.'

Two of the articles only indirectly deal with the question of the right or prohibition of women to assume public leadership in the Church. The other two articles, however, pertain more directly.

(1.) The first of these is "What Is a Church?" by Harriet Harmon Dexter. She writes:

Yes, an Official Board (always speak of them in capital letters) composed of the respected MEN of the congregation. What a blessing to the average church would be the election of one woman to this Board. Although she would be frozen out of existence the men would all die of shock and the church could start with a new pattern for democratic Christian fellowship.

Regarding the real purpose and definition of a church, Miss Dexter says:

If it is a fellowship then organizations are only means of helping Christianity function in the world. A fellowship would imply that in planning the work of the church the entire membership should be represented, men, women, and

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1. "To Advance Study of Women In Church," editorial in November 30, 1949, Christian Century.

young people--not because they are male, female and youth with certain inherent rights to be defended--but because as members of a fellowship each has a contribution to make to the total program of Christianity. . . How easily could lines of demarcation be erased if interest, not sex, determined the personnel of church leaders. .

Women have demonstrated their ability to organize and execute man-sized undertakings; they merit recognition and 'places.' Not because they are women. No. But because in the total picture of human relations men and women together must work out the pattern of Christian living.¹

(2.) The third article in this symposium is also pertinent to this study, and in essence agrees with the viewpoint of the preceding article. It is called "Adult Organizations Meet the Needs of Both" by W.C. Parry. He writes:

The Church that is facing the real tasks of building the Kingdom of God on earth will plan carefully with both men and women. They will agree upon common purposes and a total program of activity. .

Any Christian ideal is equally essential to the religious development of both men and women and if it is to be expressed in either personal or social activity it needs the best thinking and cooperation of both. The solution of the great issues of life belong to both men and women in today's world and any church organization that tends to divide responsibility on sex lines loses much of its potential strength.²

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1. Harriet Harmon Dexter: "What Is a Church?" article in symposium in March, 1940, International Journal of Religious Education, p. 6.
2. W. C. Parry: "Adult Organization Meet the Needs of Both," article in symposium in March, 1940, International Journal of Religious Education, p. 7.

e. An editorial in the Christian Century for July 16, 1947, reported the findings of a poll by Gallup, who had been learning what Americans think of women in the Christian ministry. According to him, the majority are still unconvinced that they have any business there. It is a slim majority however, forty-seven to forty-three percent. Two per cent more are in favor of women clergy if they are suitably educated and have a family situation which a local congregation can absorb. This then makes the final vote of forty-seven to forty-five per cent.

There were eight per cent who declined to vote. Mr. Gallup felt that this was a small proportion, and that the subject of the ordination of women is not one of the questions on which the general public is neutral.

It was discovered in this poll that church members were more conservative than non-church members. Mr. Gallup suggested the reason that they might have a more realistic comprehension of the problems involved.

Thirty per cent of the Roman Catholics polled thought that the admission of women to the pulpit was a good idea. This is explained, however, by the suggestion that most of them thought they were voting for Protestant churches only.

The editor comments:

The American people are more receptive to women in other professions--doctors, lawyers, government workers. What is it that the ministry requires

that the other professions don't? If this factor could be isolated, and the supporters of women clergy could deal with it, popular resistance to the proposal would not last long.¹

C. Books and Pamphlets

There have been few books or pamphlets on the subject of the ordination of women which have been written in the past decade. Of the small number that have been published, few are readily available in book stores, libraries, or publishing houses. Those which have been studied in this survey may be divided into three categories, the negative, the positive, and the impartial attitudes.

1. Negative Viewpoint.

The only piece of literature in this category which has been written in the past ten years is a pamphlet called, Bobbed Hair, Bossy Wives, and Women Preachers by J. R. Rice.² The author of this study was unable to obtain a copy of this pamphlet, but the testimony of one who has read it describes it as "completely negative in viewpoint, believing in the prohibition of women ministers for reasons which are scriptural, practical, and natural."³

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1. In Christian Century, July 16, 1947, p. 869.
2. J. R. Rice: Bobbed Hair, Bossy Wives, and Women Preachers.
3. Wilma Hunt: Personal interview, New York City, March, 1951.

2. Positive Viewpoint.

a. Alma B. White has written a book entitled, Woman's Chains, which asserts the right and ability of women to hold positions of public leadership in the Church. In the introduction to the book, she writes:

Woman has not always been the victim of social and political discrimination. In the dawn of human history she stood on an equal footing with the man. . . as helpmeet and companion, not as servant or slave.¹

The chapter titles to the book indicate the nature of the writing and the attitude of the author:

- I. Discrimination Against Women: Laws that make chains for women.
- II. Women's Gifts and Endowments
- III. The Tyranny of Women's Fashions: Man's Responsibility
- IV. Woman's Ministry: Woman's Place in Church and State
- V. Woman's Sacrifice and Devotion
- VI. Woman's Influence and Power
- VII. Christ the Emancipator
- VIII. A Double Standard
- IX. Woman's Triumph in the Franchise
- X. Woman's Opportunity and Responsibility
- XI. Woman's Cause and the War

Miss White is emphatic in her assertion of the God-given but man-forbidden right of woman for free and full expression of her life, especially her Christian life.²

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1. Alma B. White: Woman's Chains, introduction, p. v.
2. White, op. cit.

b. Philip Henry Lotz has edited a book on Creative Personalities: Women Leaders. Two of the chapters of this book deal directly with the problem of the public leadership of women in the church. The other chapters have only indirect implications.

(1.) Lowell B. Hazard wrote the second chapter on the life and work of Evangeline Booth. She is described as

a street-preacher at the age of fourteen, in command of the London work of the Salvation Army at twenty-three, ten years later a missionary to the cursing, drinking, killing gold-rushers of the Klondike, for thirty years Commander of the Salvation Army in the United States, and finally General, with three million people under her sway, scattered in ninety-one countries and colonies. No one else but a red-haired Booth could have lived that life.

She is pictured as preaching with great eloquence and winning thousands from darkness and despair. She is also characterized as

a good business woman, a fine speaker, a hard worker. . . who kept up the pace through all the years until she was still vigorous until her late seventies because of the ruggedness of her constitution. . . She is well-educated, having been tutored privately. . . Her musical compositions are among the Salvation Army's best. .

But these are but the externals of her character. She has a keen sense of humor, is adamant on system, and her officers say that she is conspicuously fair-minded. .

Deeper than these things, however, is Evangeline Booth's religion. . . There are many ways in which her attitudes remind one of the attitudes of Jesus.

In highest praise of her, the author wrote in conclusion:

It means a great deal to be a woman like Evangeline Booth. For she has not been afraid to live a vital religion in the midst of a skeptical generation, and by the sincerity and practicality of her faith she has made her faith and her Master respected.¹

(2.) The eleventh chapter of this book concerns the person of "Maude Royden: World-Famous Preacher," and was written by Laura H. Wild. The author has nothing but words of tribute to say about this woman, and begins her description with these words:

Agnes Maude Royden is considered 'the most eloquent woman in England' and by many 'the world's greatest preacher!' . . . One writer classes her with Dr. Schweitzer and Dr. Grenfell among ten true Christians he has known.

Concerning the author's viewpoint on Scriptural injunctions on this matter of women preachers, she quotes Dr. Jenkins in a tribute to Miss Royden:

If I were to take a text, it would be from St. Paul: 'Let the women keep silence in the churches,' just to show how little I agree with him in this regard, and also to show how far we have come since Paul wrote that. If he could have heard Maude Royden, he would have changed his mind.

Miss Royden was for some years the pulpit assistant at the City Temple in London. Later she joined two clergymen in founding the "Fellowship Services" in Ken-

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1. Lowell B. Hazard: "Evangeline Booth; General of the Salvation Army," in Philip H. Lotz: Creative Personalities: Woman Leaders, Chapter 2.

sington, where she is now "the beloved leader, preacher, and counselor of this religious settlement, although often absent on lecture tours and commissions the world over."

The author says of her in conclusion:

Future generations will say of Maude Royden as they have of other absolutely devoted followers of Jesus, such as St. Francis and Catherine or her contemporaries Kagawa and Grenfell, that she has left behind a consecrated life, ringing true in thought, in purpose, and in sympathy for humanity, a gifted woman using her unusual gifts for the honor and glory of her Maker.¹

c. Mary Heald Williamson has published a pamphlet on The Countrywoman and Her Church. It is not as definitely outspoken on the subject of the ordination of women in the Protestant ministry as are some of the other literary writings. However, the viewpoint of the author on the right and responsibility of women as public leaders in the Church is clear enough to enable the classification to be made.

The author quotes Bishop Bromley Oxnam, who said, "Why is it that the church has given too little opportunity for women of organizing genius and intellectual attainments?"²

In a devotional program, the words of a meditation

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1. Laura H. Wild: "Maude Royden: World Famous Preacher," in Lotz: Ibid., Chapter 11.
2. Mary H. Williamson: The Countrywoman and Her Church, p. 71.

emphasize the theme of the book, which is the active participation and leadership of women in the church:

'Live' is our word for this new year--live abundantly, live sacrificially, live in the spirit of Christ's life. Each of us has a place in the church. Let us imagine that our lives are in reality lights, the only illumination our church affords. Will there be dark corners because we have let the slightest excuse keep us from carrying out the high resolves formed?¹

3. Impartial Viewpoint.

The following three pamphlets and book are written from a neutral standpoint, with the purpose of surveying the field and reporting the facts without advocating the validity of any particular belief or attitude.

a. The book Women in Religion by Emily Solis-Cohen, Ruth Byrns, and M. Katherine Bennett contains one section which especially pertains to this study on the ordination of women into the ministry. This deals with the status of women in Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism. The chapter treating the latter will be discussed here.

The authors mentioned the traditional positive and negative viewpoints of the Scriptures on this problem, and pointed out the divergence in opinions:

There is no one statement for Protestants. But the majority of church women, while active in women's organizations within the church, are still content to leave to the men the direction

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1. Williamson, op. cit., p. 67.

of the organizational service and theological presentation. .

Many men who welcome women as their co-workers in other fields, deny to them similar privileges within the church organizations. . . Women have not so much desired to become clergymen, or to hold particular places of leadership, but they feel keenly the discrimination which says that they may not do so.

The article indicates the present trends and prevailing attitudes: **women** officials in the church are increasing. According to a questionnaire sent in 1927 to 114 denominations, in 76 churches women have full status in the highest denominational body, in 44 churches women have full status as ordained ministers. The larger and more influential denominations seem to be usually negative, while the smaller groups are often positive. The Church of England is quite liberal in its attitude. Protestant women are uniting in interests and organizations. An interdenominational Association of Women Preachers brings together those who serve in various parts of the country.¹

b. A pamphlet, Women in American Church Life by Inez M. Cavert, was prepared under the guidance of a counseling committee of women representing national interdenominational agencies.

The Biblical bases of opinions was studied by Cleo Mitchell Espy and included in this pamphlet. She gave the varying viewpoints on such passages as the

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1. Emily Solis-Cohen, Ruth Byrns and M. Katherine Bennett: Women in Religion, Chapter 4.

Creation story, the Pauline advice in I Corinthians and I Timothy, and the references to women who prophesied and taught. The balance in her thinking is weighed most heavily on the positive side, and the final statement reads, "For many people the answer is to be found in 'all are in Christ Jesus.'"

In a section on Women Ministers, the author writes concerning the stand of various denominations on the ordination or licensing of women. She says: "Of 111 denominations for which information could be secured, 41 ordain women and seven license them." There are reported to be 3,308 women ministers in this country, according to the Federal census in 1940. There seems to have been little or no substantial increase in either the number of women ministers, or, in most denominations at least, their use in the pastorate since 1940, in spite of the fact, the author continues, of the grave lack of ministers and thousands of churches vacant or provided only with a "supply."

The opportunities for women pastors vary with the particular denomination or local church. The study by Cavert shows that

some denominational executives in the bodies that ordain women are interested in helping the woman minister to find a church; others are not, even though they have ample opportunity to know the individual concerned. Some theological seminaries admit women on the same basis as men, some limit sharply the number of women they enroll.

Short biographies of the outstanding women ministers in the United States are included in this pamphlet. The type of training and abilities of each are compared with women ministers in general and with each other. Many women ministers are highly trained, others are not. The author suggests that "the reluctance of many seminaries to train women for church work may have kept some women from securing more adequate preparation."

The pamphlet treats many more subjects dealing with women's work in the Church which do not directly affect the question of a female ministry. The introduction emphasizes the fact that "the emphasis of this report is on the responsibilities of women in the churches, not on their rights."¹

c. The World Council of Churches published a revised interim report on the Life and Work of Women in the Church. Committees in fifty-eight countries wrote long reports which were compiled and studied for this survey by the World Council. Comparisons and contrasts were made between the customs and practices in lands around the globe.

Several pages were devoted to the pros and cons on the full ordination of women. The main negative reasons given were:

1. The nature and God-given functions of women

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1. Cavert, op. cit, p. 7.

preclude their being called to this high office.

2. Specific injunctions such as 'Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over man, she is to keep silent.'

3. The authority and tradition of the Church have not included the possibility of women serving as clergy.

4. The fact that certain churches consider this a closed issue would make the reunion of the churches more difficult--perhaps impossible.

5. There would be resistance in parishes to having a woman clergyman. .

6. There would be especially difficult problems for a woman clergywoman to face in case she married and had family and home responsibilities.

7. If women should be admitted to the full ministry, it might deter men from answering the call to it.

The main viewpoints of those favoring the ordination of women are as follows:

1. Women are now satisfactorily serving in some Communion.

2. The problems which they face in the Ministry have been met and largely overcome in other spheres of work.

3. The full ministry of women is required by the Christian doctrine of human nature.

4. 'In Christ there is neither male nor female; for we are all one in Christ Jesus.'

5. Under the stress of danger and trouble the Church has been thankful to use them to the full.

6. In the present godlessness and indifference to religion throughout the world, the Church needs the joint service and leadership of men and women.

7. In some of the younger Churches where women

missionaries have been relatively free from traditional restrictions, there is a desire for women to serve the Church in the fullest way.

The pamphlet stresses the fact that

important as the subject of 'women clergy' is, in its need for further exploration, it represents only one phase of the life and contribution of women in the Church and should not be allowed to overshadow the whole. Also, further study should be free from fear, pride, resentment and prejudice, relying on the promised assistance of the Holy Spirit to lead the Church into all truth.¹

D. Summary

This chapter has included a survey of sixteen magazine and newspaper articles, five pamphlets and three books which deal with the problem of the ordination of women in the Protestant ministry. The following table sums up the numbers of pieces of literature which have been written from the various standpoints.

	Negative	Positive	Impartial	Total
Magazine and Newspaper Article	--	5	11	16
Books	--	2	1	3
Pamphlets	1	1	3	5
Total per viewpoint	1	8	15	24

The following table indicates the number of articles, books

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1. World Council of Churches, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

or pamphlets in which positive or negative reasons have been presented.

	Negative	Positive
Magazine and Newspaper Articles	6	12
Books	1	3
Pamphlets	3	3
Total per viewpoint	10	18

The major reasons on the part of those desiring to fully prohibit the ordination of women in the ministry and the number of literary writings mentioning each are as follows:

1. Women are unbusinesslike--1.
2. Congregations are prejudiced against women and will not accept them as pastors--3.
3. Women are emotionally unbalanced and cannot keep confidences--1.
4. There is already a feminine overbalance in the churches--1.
5. Women are too weak physically and have the problem of childbirth--2.
6. Women's place is in the home, and her responsibilities there should take up all her time and effort--1.
7. The ordination and ministry of women are positively forbidden in the Scriptures--5.

8. Tradition does not include the idea of women ministers--3.

9. For practical reasons women are unfit to be ministers--1.

10. The ordination of women ministers in some churches would make difficult or impossible the union of churches--1.

The major positive reasons in favor of women ministers and the number of literary writings mentioning each are as follows:

1. Successful women ministers have been proven to be good business women--3.

2. Most congregations do not have deep-seated prejudices against women ministers--2.

3. Women have been proven emotionally stable and most discrete in confidential matters--1.

4. Good women leaders would attract more men into the churches--1.

5. Physical difficulties have been recognized and largely overcome in other professions--2.

6. Women ministers are especially good in counseling in time of trouble--1.

7. The teachings of Jesus and other Biblical writers do not forbid the ordination of women--3.

8. Women have been successful in other professions, and surely would be in the ministry--3.

9. In prohibiting the ordination of women the Church is backward and is depriving itself of good leadership--6.

10. The successful ministry of outstanding women proves their ability and the blessing of God upon their work--8.

11. Women have every right to preach--1.

12. It is woman's responsibility to preach--1.

13. The full ministry of women is required by the Christian doctrine of human nature--1.

14. Equality in Christ and the spirit of democracy emphasize the rightness of the ordination of women--3.

15. The church has been glad to use women in time of trouble--1.

16. Women ministers are especially valuable in daytime visitation of housewives, where a visit by a male minister would be indecorous--1.

17. Women have the right to disregard the Pauline injunction to keep silence in the churches--1.

Several general statements or observations were mentioned in these articles, books and pamphlets:

1. The majority of individuals are unconvinced that women have any business in the ministry--1.¹

2. The subject of the ordination of women is not one on which the general public is neutral; on the contrary,

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1. This is a 2 per cent majority, 47 to 45 per cent.

there is much controversy--3.

3. There is an increasing number of women in full-time professional church work--4.

4. There is a great lack of pastoral opportunities even in the churches which do ordain women--6.

5. Women ministers usually are sent to the poorest churches with the most meager salaries--4.

6. There is special antagonism toward women ministers that is not felt toward women in other professions--2.

CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF INTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE PASSAGES
RELEVANT TO THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

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A SURVEY OF INTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE PASSAGES RELEVANT TO THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

A. Introduction

The preceding two chapters have presented the many-sided convictions and points of view of representative present-day churches and current literature on the question of the ordination of women. The teachings of the New Testament have been mentioned frequently both by the pro and the con groups as bases for their arguments. It seems important, therefore, to examine closely the various interpretations of the relevant Scripture passages, in order to have a clear and complete picture of the types of exegesis and explanation of these portions of the Bible.

A study will be made of three general groupings of the pertinent portions of Scripture: direct hortatory (those major groupings of verses which constitute the primary "field of battle" between those for and those against women ministers), indirect hortatory (verses of Scripture whose implications are used in the promotion of the various opinions), and biographical references (verses indicating or describing the active ministry of certain women).

In discussing the first group of passages, the direct hortatory, the negative, the conditional and the

positive viewpoints will be presented. In writing of the indirect hortatory and the biographical references, the negative and positive attitudes will be stated.

The commentaries examined largely will be those suggested in the Princeton Seminary Bibliography of Bible Study for Theological Students, which is widely regarded as complete and authoritative. Those writers who most clearly and adequately express their viewpoints and reasons for the interpretation of the Bible will be quoted. Brief reference will be made to other commentators, and comparisons and contrasts made.

B. Direct Hortatory Passages of Scripture

1. I Corinthians 11:2-16.

a. Negative Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

Some of the commentators and exegetes whose books were studied for this survey were very definite in stating a completely negative viewpoint on the question of the preaching ministry of women. Perhaps the most outspoken writer is Robert Dabney, who proclaims that those who interpret differently are modern infidels even though they profess to accept the Scriptures.¹

Most authors agree that the Corinthian women were in the habit of personally participating in the church

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1. Robert Dabney: Discussions, Vol. II, pp. 96-118.

services. As Parry states, "Verse 5 shows that it was the custom at Corinth for women to take active part in the assembly," and although "here Paul definitely alludes to the custom without comment, in 14:34 he forbids it, as a custom peculiar to Corinth."¹ Weizsacker is in agreement with this, only he carries the explanation further.

It is implied in the preceding discussion (11:5) that a woman not only prayed but prophesied, and it was to this that the command to cover the head was applied. She then stood in the guise that corresponded to her destiny in life.²

There is no contradiction, of course, between the directions for women's dress when praying or prophesying and the truth that Paul absolutely forbids such acts. For, he continues, "It is not even certain that in the command (11:5) Paul referred to praying and prophesying in the congregation."³

It is not absolutely clear in Weizsacker's argument whether he believes that the reference is to action at home or in a non-official religious meeting, or whether the words for pray and prophecy usually have been misinterpreted. Dabney firmly asserts the latter, and argues that it is a "criminal violence to represent Paul as thus contradicting himself." For prophecy literally means

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1. R. St. John Parry: The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, p. 113.
2. Carl Von Weizsacker: The Apostolic Age of the Christian Church, p. 387.
3. Ibid.

"praise" and refers to the singing of hymns in the worship service. Thus the meaning here is that women will be allowed to join in the congregational singing if they are careful to dress properly.¹

The explanation of the demand for the women to wear a veil is presented fully by Weizsacker.

Paul did not in any way go beyond the conception of women's position which at bottom belonged to the whole ancient world. . . In I Corinthians he opposed a practice unobjectionable to Greek Christians, and desired to substitute for it the Jewish custom. According to this, women were only to appear with their heads covered, a regulation that first suggests the congregational meetings. It may be conjectured, it is not however stated, that this might seem advisable to Paul because of a danger to morality. The reasons adduced by him are meant to show that it neither could nor should be otherwise. The evidence is first taken from nature, and from the natural feeling that required a woman to let her hair grow; but secondly, from Holy Scripture; for he inferred from the history of creation that the woman was under the dominion of man. Finally, it was also necessary in another respect that woman should be marked to show this subordination; the reason is only briefly hinted at, but it is also scriptural. It was accordingly necessary that the Greeks should adopt this fashion as well as primitive Christendom, the churches of God. (11:16).²

Parry explains verse 10:

To have a sign of authority on her head, have authority over, covering, is sign that she is under the authority of her husband. . . The natural rendering: 'to keep her head under control; i.e., by veiling it. In this case, the authority is primarily the woman's own, exercised over her head by veiling it; but in so exercising

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1. Dabney, op. cit., p. 97.
2. Weizsacker, op. cit., pp. 384-5.

it, she acknowledges the authority of her husband. . . . The object of the woman's action is the acknowledgement of her relation to her husband; and it is in agreement with the regular usage of the phrase. .¹

The important thing, reiterate these commentators, is the emphasis upon the truth that woman must not usurp authority over a man. Dabney adds in emphasis that every true believer will accept this argument as sufficient and conclusive.² He also adds an interesting comment. The syllogism is this: Men or leaders of worship services must have their heads uncovered. Women must have their heads covered. Therefore women can never be church leaders without "glaring impropriety."³

There is some disagreement as to the genesis or the authority of Paul's commands. Parry writes, "The article (in verse 2) with traditions shows that these were not St. Paul's own rules merely, but that they were current in the Churches."⁴ He implies throughout his discussion that the complete prohibition of women ministers is a universally valid rule of life. Weizsacker, on the other hand, emphasizes the narrow Jewish influence upon Paul's ideas.

In this matter Paul was not merely anxious about morality; his thought was bound up in Jewish ideas, just as his argument breathes wholly

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1. Parry, op. cit., p. 114.
2. Dabney, op. cit., pp. 100-110.
3. Ibid., pp. 97-98.
4. Parry, op. cit., p. 112.

the spirit of the Jewish exposition of Scripture.¹

b. Conditional Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

There is another group of writers whose viewpoint on the subject of women ministers is conditional, neither completely negative nor yet completely positive.

Godet presents a background picture for the injunction of veil-wearing:

The ancients in general laid down a difference between the bearing of men and that of women in their appearance in public. . . According to several passages from ancient authors, while the long hair of the woman was regarded as her best ornament, the man, who, by the care he bestowed upon his hair effaced the difference of the sexes, was despised as a voluptuary. . . In regard to acts of public worship, there existed a remarkable difference between the Greeks and the Romans. The Greek prayed with his head uncovered, while the Roman veiled his head. . . The Jewish high priest officiated with his mitre on his head, and the Jew of the present day prays with his head covered, no doubt in token of reverence and submission. It appears from all these facts what an intimate relation the feeling of the ancients established between the worshipper's demeanour, as regards the noblest part of his being, the head, and his moral and social position. 'The point was not here only,' as Heinrich well says, 'a matter of decorum.' His conduct in this respect corresponded to a profound religious feeling.²

Further explanation of Paul's feelings and purposes in this situation is given by Massie:

Paul was a man of his age, and so far as we can discern his mind on this subject, believed heartily in the subordination of women. Yet he himself

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1. Weizsacker, op. cit., pp. 384-387.
2. Frederick L. Godet: Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 104.

would have been shocked if he had been present at the exhibition of their boldness as they prayed and prophesied unveiled before the men of Corinth . . . But Paul besides being a man of his age, was also, in the best sense, a man of the world; . . . and even if he had been a thorough believer in the emancipation of women, he would have deprecated most earnestly, in the interests of the credit and the spread of Christianity, such a premature and pernicious application to social conditions of the spiritual principle of Christian liberty and equality. . . Yet the apostle was no extremist: he would not take upon himself the responsibility of quenching the Spirit even in a woman; and hence--though at last he forbids altogether the prominence of women in the public services. . .--he seems virtually to make the concession, 'If she is to speak, let her at least be modestly veiled.'¹

Massie takes it as fact that the women actually had been active in public services without their veils. Godet agrees, while yet denying that the men were guilty of similar offense by appearing with heads covered. He writes:

Chrysostom has concluded from verse 4, as Edwards also does, that the men, too, at Corinth, did violence to their proper dignity by being covered. But it is not probable that abuses arose in that direction. . . The demeanour which becomes the man is only mentioned to bring out by contrast that which alone is becoming in the woman.²

There is a difference of opinion as to the type of service to which reference is made. Edwards writes,

Meyer and others suggest that in our passage he is speaking of the smaller meetings for devotion. . . But there is no hint of any such distinction. . . and her subjection would be just as much a reason for silence in the smaller assemblies as in the

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1. J. Massie: Corinthians, pp. 26, 34, 35.
2. Godet, op. cit., p. 113.

larger ones.¹

Beet believes the passage refers to meetings of women only.² Hoffman states that women are allowed to take part in family worship. Godet refutes this, saying that Paul would not insist that a woman wear a veil when at home.³ Robertson and Plummer write,

Praying or prophesying must be understood in the same way in both verses: it is arbitrary to say that the man is supposed to be taking the lead in full public worship, but the woman in mission services or family prayers.⁴

The definition of prayer and prophecy has been much under discussion also. As mentioned above, Robertson and Plummer insist on a uniform interpretation in the case of both men and women. According to them, "The 'prophesying' means public teaching, admonishing or comforting, delivering God's message to the congregation."⁵ Godet states, "Prayer is more or less identified with speaking in a tongue, a gift which is treated conjointly with prophecy."⁶

Godet explains in full his interpretation of the reference in I Corinthians 11:5, "Every woman that prayeth

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1. Thomas C. Edwards: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 270.
2. Beet, in Godet, op. cit., pp. 115, 116.
3. Godet, op. cit., p. 116.
4. Archibald Robinson and Alfred Plummer: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, p. 230.
5. Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p. 229.
6. Godet, op. cit., p. 113.

or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head":

Because the woman is in a position contrasted with that of the man, in so far as she has here below a visible head, she would dishonor this head by affecting a costume which would be a symbol of independence. And since the woman does not naturally belong to public life, if it happen that in the spiritual domain she has to exercise a function which brings her into prominence, she ought to strive the more to put herself out of view by covering herself with a veil, which declares the dependence in which she remains relatively to her husband. . . . It can only be to the shame of her husband if a wife present herself in a dress which belongs to the man. By uncovering her head (in the literal sense) she dishonors her head (in the figurative sense).¹

McGiffert believes that Paul's primary concern here is to advocate the fact that

a woman must always be veiled, even when praying and prophesying, even when exercising her religious right as a child of God. The exercise even of such a right must not lead her to do violence to the traditional law of propriety.²

The commentators mentioned before agree on a conditional interpretation of Paul's words here in the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians, yet their reasoning is somewhat different. Edwards writes:

If he intends the women not to pray at all in public, it is a needless waste of words to discuss the question of the veil. Tertullian thinks he permitted the women to pray and prophecy, but not to teach. But $\lambda\alpha\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$ in 14:34 means that special form of teaching that is prophesying.³

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1. Ibid., pp. 114, 115.
2. Arthur G. McGiffert: History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age, pp. 308-309.
3. Edwards, op. cit., p. 269.

His summary is that "women are permitted to pray and prophesy under certain restrictions."¹

Robertson and Plummer affirm that "this dependence of woman has its limits,"² according to verse eleven: "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God."³ These writers continue:

Very possibly the women had urged that if the Spirit moved them to speak, they must speak; and how could they speak if their faces were veiled? In the extreme case, which perhaps would never occur, the Apostle says that they must speak veiled. They must not outrage propriety by coming to public worship unveiled because of the bare possibility that the Spirit may compel them to speak.⁴

Massie agrees that Paul would never absolutely forbid the working of the Spirit within women.⁵ McGiffert accepts the idea that there is nothing presumptuous or unChristian about the public participation of women in the religious services, although it is perhaps unwise because of the circumstances:

Not that they had not the right to speak, to pray, to prophesy, as they were in the habit of doing according to 11:2 ff., but that such public participation in the services would do more harm than

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1. Ibid., p. 387.
2. Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p. 227.
3. I Corinthians 11:11,12.
4. Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., 226.
5. Massie, op. cit., pp. 34,35.

good, because it was commonly regarded as a scandal for a woman thus to put herself forward in public and the benefit her words might convey would be more than counterbalanced by the evil effect of such violation of the common rules of decency.¹

Godet sums up his interpretation thus:

I rather think therefore that while rejecting as a rule the speaking of women in Churches, Paul yet meant to leave then a certain degree of liberty for the exceptional case in which, in consequence of a sudden revelation (prophesying), or under the influence of a strong inspiration of prayer and thanksgiving (speaking in tongues) the woman should feel herself constrained to give utterance to this extraordinary impulse of the Spirit. Only at the time she thus went out of her natural position of reserve and dependence, he insisted the more that she should not forget, nor the Church with her, the abnormal character of the action; and this was the end which the veil was intended to serve.²

c. Positive Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

The third group of writers set forth a definitely positive viewpoint on the question of the active ministry of women, asserting that Paul neither prohibited nor discouraged the work and leadership of women in the churches.

Clarke insists on consistency of definition, saying that whatever may be the meaning of praying and prophesying in respect to the man, they have precisely the same meaning in respect to the woman. So that some women at least, as well as some men, might speak to others to edification, exhortation, and comfort. And this kind

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1. McGiffert, op. cit., pp. 308-9.
2. Godet, op. cit., p. 117.

of prophesying or teaching was predicted by Joel 2:28 and referred to by Peter (Acts 2:17). And had there not been such gifts bestowed upon woman, the prophecy could not have had its fulfilment. According to Clarke:

The only difference marked by the apostle was, the man had his head covered, because he was the representative of Christ; the woman had hers covered, because she was placed there by the order of God in subjection to man; and because it was the custom both among Greeks and Romans, and among the Jews, an express law that no woman should be seen abroad without a veil. This was and is a custom through all the East, and none but public prostitutes go without veils; if a woman should appear in public without a veil, she would dishonor her head--her husband. And she must appear like to those women who have their hair shaven off as the punishment for adultery.¹

Moffatt writes that Paul resented such an innovation, not wearing a veil, as "undesirable departure from social etiquette, since only women of loose character appeared in public bareheaded."² He adds some words of explanation for the reason why Christian women would wonder if worshipping unveiled was not permissible:

As the Christian meetings were held in a large room of some private house, it was felt that while women's heads might be covered out of doors, there was no reason why the veil should be retained within the household of the Lord. Like a Roman matron, the Christian woman would pull the corner of her robe over her head as she walked from her house to the meeting, but surely indoors she was in a family circle, where her head was not

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1. Adam Clarke in Catherine M. Booth: Papers on Practical Religion, pp. 98-99.
2. James Moffatt: The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, p. 149.

covered. Paul vigorously objects.¹

Moffatt states that the very fact that Paul spends time describing the proper dress for such an occasion indicates that he accepted the fact and the right of the public participation of women in the worship services. According to this commentator, "Psychologically it is hard to conceive that if Paul had objected to the principle. . . he would spend time discussing how in 11:2-16."²

Booth writes in much the same vein that if Paul does not here recognize the fact that women did actually pray and prophesy in the primitive churches, his language has no meaning at all; and if he does not recognize their right to do so by dictating the proprieties of their appearance while so engaged--no sense in his language. He continues:

According to the logic of Dr. Barnes, the apostle here, in arguing against an improper and indecorous mode of performance forbids the performance itself, the prohibition extends to the men as well as the women; for Paul as expressly reprehends a man praying with his head covered, as he does a woman with hers uncovered. With as much force might the doctor assert that in reproofing the same church for their improper celebration of the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:20,21) Paul prohibits all Christians, in every age, celebrating it at all. The question with the Corinthians was not whether the woman should pray or prophesy at all, that question had been settled on the day of Pentecost; but whether, as a

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1. Ibid., p. 149.
2. Ibid., p. 231.

matter of convenience, they might do so without their veils. The apostle clearly and kindly explains that by the law of nature and of society it would be improper to uncover her head while engaged in acts of public worship. There is no intimation that they ever had uncovered their heads while so engaged, or that men ever prayed or preached with their hats on.¹

Moffatt asserts that there is no evidence that this chapter refers to a prayer meeting in contrast with a regular church service.² Booth agrees on this point:

Some feel this means women may speak or pray in meetings of their own sex, but not in mixed assembly. But according to most reliable statistics, two-thirds of the whole church is and has been composed of their own sex. On whose authority can women speak thus to a majority of the church?³

Such commentators are surprised that anyone should question the approval of Paul on the subject of the active participation of women in the religious meetings. Moffatt expresses himself thus, "In the worship of the Church women would not merely share the holy kiss, but pray aloud and speak as moved by the Spirit. To this no one took exception, not even Paul himself."⁴

According to Booth, the character of the prophesying here referred to by the apostle is defined in I Corinthians 14:3,4,31. It was directed to the "edification, exhortation, and comfort of believers," and the result

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1. Booth, op. cit., p. 99.
2. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 231.
3. Booth, op. cit., p. 99.
4. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 149.

anticipated was the conviction of unbelievers and unlearned persons. Women who speak in assemblies for worship under the influence of the Holy Spirit assume thereby no personal authority over others; they simply deliver the message of the gospel, which implies obedience, subjection, and responsibility rather than authority and power.¹

Therefore, Booth concludes, there is no reason for some of the violent outbursts of objection to the idea of a woman leader in the church. The negative, forbidding attitude of Paul is merely a product of men's imagination. For, the author continues:

Paul expresses no surprise, utters no syllable of censure--only anxious that women should not provoke unnecessary obloquy by laying aside their customary head-dress or departing from the dress which was indicative of modesty in the country in which they lived.²

Dietrick adds a final word in regard to the interpretation of Paul's true feelings in the matter:

As if Paul foresaw that his words on the subjection of woman might be tortured into falsehood, in this very letter to the Corinthians, after mentioning the historical fact that man is the head of the woman, he adds, 'Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord.'³

2. I Corinthians 14:34-37.

a. Negative Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

The negative group of commentators interpret

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1. Booth, op. cit., p. 98.
2. Ibid., p. 100.
3. Ellen Dietrick: Women in the Early Christian Ministry, p. 31.

I Corinthians 14 in just about the same manner as they did I Corinthians 11, even though the material is quite different. The unanimous conclusion is that the active participation of women in any church service--whether it be praying, prophesying, teaching, or asking questions--is absolutely forbidden.

Weizsacker believes that the reference in this chapter is to church conferences:

The Apostle afterward expressed himself as to the position of women when he comes to speak of their participation in the conferences held by the Church, using almost sharper language than in the discussion of their head-covering. The woman was to continue in her state of subordination. . . . And Paul deduced from this position, whose justification he did not here require to repeat, that women ought not to speak in the congregation.¹

Parry is in full agreement with this: "The women of the community are forbidden to speak at the meetings; and it is implied that this rule is observed everywhere but in Corinth."²

The authors see no contradiction between chapters 14 and chapter 11 in which details of women's dress when praying or prophesying are given. Weizsacker believes that Paul may not even have been referring to speaking in the congregation in the earlier reference.³ Parry writes also that there is no inconsistency in Paul's statements:

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1. Weizsacker, op. cit., pp. 386, 387.
2. Parry, op. cit., pp. 158, 159.
3. Weizsacker, op. cit., p. 386.

The simple solution is that he deals with two different matters in the two passages: in 11 he is dealing with the dress of women, and gives rules which extend beyond the case of women when praying or prophesying. Here he is dealing definitely with the question whether women are to speak. . . and forbids it.¹

Weizsacker elaborates somewhat on the situation:

What is here forbidden is the taking part in the conferences: they are to be silent, and to subordinate themselves, while the men framed decrees; they were not even allowed to speak on the pretext of desiring information; they should ask their husbands at home. The matters here are wholly different from those discussed in 11:5.²

The discussion of the subject by Dabney is detailed and emphatically negative. He commends St. Paul on his intelligence and decency in stoutly denying to women the right of preaching. He writes at length concerning the "spirit of wilfulness" which is a feature of our native carnality, which tempts women to feel that any subordination is a hardship. He protests that the world would be truly turning upside down to have a woman head in the church and a man the head at home and in other business. Women who seek to preach in the pulpit are gratifying their carnal ambition and the lust for the carnal applause of men. Freedom to preach will lead to equal rights in all things, which is certainly radical and based on completely false and misguided ideas. Women preachers would "undermine the reverence of mankind for

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1. Parry, op. cit., p. 159.
2. Weizsacker, op. cit., p. 387.

the authority of the Bible." They should gladly "let well enough alone and stop grasping at an impossible prize."¹

Weizsacker concludes his treatment of this chapter in a spirit of wonder that there could ever have arisen the idea of women ministers.

In both these cases (chapters 11 and 14) Paul was opposed by a certain stubbornness which discarded his rules and would not give up their own demand. Women's rights, deduced from the equality conferred by the faith, seem to have been advocated with peculiar zeal. There were so-called prophets and spiritual men who championed them in Corinth.²

b. Conditional Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

Godet begins his discussion of this section with an interpretative paraphrase of Paul's words:

Do you think you have the right to put yourselves above the rules followed by all the other Churches? . . . All the assemblies have their customs; and to these customs belong the silence of women in the assemblies. . . Let your women behave like those of the saints in all the Churches.³

There is some difference of opinion as to the translation of the verb λαλεῖν, to speak. Goudge asserts that the reference is to interruptions the women made by asking foolish questions.⁴ On the other hand, Godet insists that this is not the case:

The word λαλεῖν, to speak, in this chapter, cannot apply merely to simple questions, or vain gossiping, in which women might indulge with one another during worship. The term speaking in the Church. . . can

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1. Dabney, op. cit., pp. 96-118.
2. Weizsacker, op. cit., p. 387.
3. Godet, op. cit., p. 309.
4. Henry L. Goudge: The First Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 89.

only designate a public speaking, which has as its end to teach and edify.¹

Exactly contrary to the opinion of Booth expressed in the Positive Section on I Corinthians 11, (page 78) is that of Godet on the speaking in question as an act of authority. He believes that it is obvious that the apostle regards speaking in public as an act of authority exercised over the congregation which listens; compare I Timothy 2:12. And as the attitude of authority over the man is contrary to that of obedience which is imposed on the woman during the present economy, he draws the conclusion that the speaking of the woman in public is in contradiction to the position assigned to her by the Divine will expressed in the law.

Godet writes further:

It is easy to see why the apostle substitutes the general idea: to be subject, which relates to the whole life of woman, to that of not speaking in the assemblies; it is because the silence of women in worship is only an application of the general condition of subordination which is imposed on them in relation to man. Of course, the law contained nothing regarding the part of women in the assemblies; but by determining the character of their life in general, it had according to Paul's view, indirectly settled the question.²

This speaking, whether it be unruly questioning or dignified teaching, is however, not referred to as being "criminal, immoral", as Godet and others agree, "but

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1. Godet, op. cit., p. 313.
2. Ibid., p. 311.

it is a question of propriety and modesty."¹

Robertson and Plummer are not quite sure what is included in their final interpretation of this passage. Their suggestion as to the extent of a woman's usual speaking in the church is limited to this: "The women are to keep silence in the public services. They could join in the Amen (verse 16) but otherwise are not to be heard."² Earlier in their discussion of the subject, they asserted that Paul certainly would not deny to women their right to speak if so directed by the Holy Spirit to pray or prophesy. Yet now they add a qualifying and doubtful statement: "We are not sure whether Paul contemplated the possibility of women prophesying in exceptional cases. What is said in 11:5 may be hypothetical."³

The solution of the difficulty of compatibility of chapter 11 and chapter 14 is treated thus by Edwards:

Why may we not suppose that the injunction of silence had not occurred to the Apostle? When it does occur to him he bases it on the truth that underlies the symbolism of the present passage.⁴

The conclusion of Godet has been treated in full in the discussion of I Corinthians 11, and may be summed up in these words:

We think it not far from the apostle's view if we

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1. Godet, op. cit., p. 312.
2. Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p. 324.
3. Ibid., p. 325.
4. Edwards, op. cit., 270.

state thus the result of the two passages taken together: 'As to woman, if under the sudden inspiration or revelation, let her speak if she be properly veiled. Ordinarily, however, she is to remain silent.'¹

c. Positive Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

There is a complete treatment of the background of the world in the time in which this letter to the Corinthians was written to be found in Hays. He quotes from an article by James Donaldson of Scotland, "The Position and Influence of Women in Ancient Athens." In the old world there were two classes of women who were not slaves. One group could scarcely move from their rooms, and were watched and restricted in every way. The second type had no restrictions whatever, and could move about freely. The first were the "citizen women," who had special apartments in an upper story and were forbidden even to be present at home banquets, for the men preferred to dine alone rather than to expose their wives to the neighbor's gaze. They were not educated at all. Donaldson states:

Though there never was in the history of the world such a numerous race of great thinkers, poets, sculptors, painters, architects, in one city at one time, as in Athens, not one virtuous Athenian woman ever attained to the slightest distinction in any department of literature or science.²

The second group discussed in this article were

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1. Godet, op. cit., p. 313.
2. Donaldson in George F. Hays: May Women Speak? p. 32.

the "strangers" or "courtesans." They could not marry, but they could do everything else they liked, and enter into any other relationship with men, temporary or permanent. They were often called the "Heterai" or companions. The citizen women had to be wives and mothers, and no more. The Heterai were the only educated women in Athens.

According to Donaldson, none of the women had any political power. Thousands of the Heterai, unprotected women, were employed as tools of the basest passions, "seeking only, under the form of affection, to ruin men, and send them in misery to an early grave."

This commentator continues his discussion by saying that when Christianity entered Rome, it found the relation of the sexes not so free as among the Hebrews and among Christians, but such as to need no peculiar regulations other than those suggested by courtesy and propriety. Women could be left to their own sense of propriety in the steps to be taken in the assisting of the knowledge of Christ. A proper knowledge, therefore, of the condition of female society in Rome, and in Corinth and Ephesus, makes the difference between Paul's encouragements to activity with the former, completely consistent with his earnest demand for extreme caution in Greek society until Christianity had re-constructed it.

It is certain according to Donaldson that on the first introduction of Christianity into the Greek cities

(Athens, Corinth, Ephesus), if any women heard the gospel preached, they were not virtuous members of families, but were of the Heterai.

The writer explains that if we remember how little the Corinthian women could know of the meaning of a Christian service where men and women are gathered together for the worship of God, we can fully understand why in the midst of the service they should ask their husbands of the meaning. That was the privilege of the Heterai in the midst of the instruction of the philosophers to their disciples. As in Exodus 12:2, man could know what worship meant in Greece in the Christian sense, and women could not. The proprieties of the occasion demanded that this instruction (needless in a Christian country, indispensable there) should be sought by the women at home, and furnished by their husbands in the quiet of a home life.¹

Loomis presents a complete study of the Greek word, *λαλέω*, and of the connection of the verses 34-37 with the chapter's context.

The classic use of *λαλέειν* is to speak, talk, prate, chatter, babble, twitter. The very root of the word *λαλ* like the unmeaning *lal*, *lal*, *lal* or the first sounds from the tongue of a child, would seem to indicate its origin and meaning.

In the religion of the Greeks the gods and goddesses

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1. Donaldson in Hays, op. cit., pp. 32-49.

might quaff their nectar and prate and babble, as well as the men and women over their wine; but the Hebrew's religion would never permit him to predicate prate or babble of the utterances of his God or Messiah or angels, or even of his inspired prophets, even though these utterances might be as meaningless and incomprehensible to him as the babble of gods or men.

'Let the prophets speak (λαλέιτωσαν) two or three and let the others judge'. . . Only 5 verses after this (34) it is said of the women, 'It is not permitted unto them to speak (λαλεῖν). It would seem at first view to settle the question. The prophets (the men) are permitted to λαλεῖν, the women not. Let us examine the passage a little more closely. 'Let 2 or 3 of the prophets speak in order, and let the others judge.' There was evidently a doubt in the case whether these prophets were really moved by the Holy Ghost in these utterances, or self-deceived perhaps, were only giving utterance to their own unedifying imaginations or fancies; of that matter, the others were to 'judge.' Till that can be decided, therefore, in the Hebrew sense of λαλεῖν, let him 'word' his dubious words, or in the Greek sense, let him babble for the time being.

But, as is said in the following verse, (30) 'If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.' If there is an inspired message more certain and edifying, let this dubious talk, this unedifying babble, cease. If there had been no doubt of the inspiration of the prophet, Paul would probably have used the word, 'Let the prophets prophesy', (προφητεύωσαν) but with the doubt he uses λαλέιτωσαν.¹

Loomis continues in his exposition of I Corinthians 14:

In the noted I Corinthians 14, λαλέω in some of its forms occurs 24 times, λέγω only 3 times. There seems to have been a state of things in the Corinthian church that made the word λαλέω singularly apposite and appropriate, so that the apostle

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1. H. Loomis: A Woman in the Pulpit--Did Paul Forbid It? pp. 6-10.

could think of no other word so adapted to the confusion and disorders. There were sectarian divisions and controversies, 'some for Paul and some for Apollos,' envyings, law-suits before the ungodly, discussion about meat used in idol's temples, contentions about the relative merits of spiritual gifts; at the very communion table, some drunken and some thirsty; and the boldest of the Corinthian women with uncovered heads, sadly mixed up in these discussions and disorders.¹

Loomis continues that the women are not the only members of the church reproved by the apostle, and commanded to keep silence. For the Scriptures read in the 28th verse, "If there be no interpretation (of unknown tongue) let him keep silence" (σιγάτω), again, verse 30, "Let the first hold his peace" (σιγάτω). The same word is applied to the women in verse 34. The context shows it to be only temporary, and from a certain kind of talk not edifying to the church (λαλιά), the babble of foreign tongues. Loomis asks, by what rule of logic is it partial and temporary in one case, and general and perpetual in the other? The confusion had been made principally by the men, and the apostle's rebukes were chiefly to them, with the reason for it, in the 33rd verse: "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace."

Verse 34 states that the women are not to speak in this certain way, but to be in subjection. Loomis believes that there is great expository force in the antithesis in this passage. It implies that the λαλιά was

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1. Loomis, op. cit., p. 11.

a kind of insubordinate talk. He writes:

Had a modest, loving woman only poured out her soul in prayer, or told what Jesus had done for her. . . as Anna did in the temple, no prohibition in that. And if Paul had wished to prohibit that kind of speaking, he would not have written ἀλλὰ (but) making the antitheses, but γὰρ (for) she is a woman; but if it was insubordinate wrangle or profitless discussion with the men, the antithesis is wonderfully appropriate and shows clearly what λαλεῖν meant.¹

This discussion by Loomis continues with the statement that the sophism at the foundation of this whole controversy is a literary curiosity. It consists in translating a Greek word, λαλέω--restricted in its use to certain kinds of speaking, excluding other kinds, such as plain edifying discourse in a religious meeting, such as to pray, προσεύχεσθαι to prophesy, to preach, προφητεύω -- by an English word that includes them all, thus lugging into the conclusion what was not named in the major premise.

The argument in Moffatt's discussion is along the same lines, although not quite as detailed. He agrees in his definition of the kind of talking referred to here.

Paul objected strongly to a practice, evidently popular in Corinth, of matrons taking part in the discussion or interpretation of what had been said by some prophet or teacher during the service. λαλεῖν carries a lighter and lower sense of chatter or talk compared with the less derogatory λεγέιν.²

He continues that there is no doubt that to ask

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1. Loomis, op. cit., p. 12.
2. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 232.

information might be done seriously. Questions could be put to a rabbi in the synagogue, though a woman's right to education was not definitely recognized by the rabbis. Musonius Rufus at Rome went so far, in the other hand, as to claim that a woman had as much right and capacity as a man to understand the philosophy of the noble life, in her own way. And Paul similarly agrees that it is legitimate for her to seek information about some statement made by a prophet or teacher. Yet matrons had better reserve their questions for private enquiry at home. According to Moffatt,

Some rabbis, like Paul's younger contemporary Eliezer, even maintained that a woman should devote herself to domestic duties instead of asking questions about the Torah at all. Paul's sense of Christian freedom carries him beyond such a narrow conception.¹

Loomis sums up his interpretation of the passage in this manner:

It is as if the apostle had said to the Corinthian church--There is discussion and confusion enough among you made by the men, without adding a woman's voice to it. Let your women keep silence from all this babble and wrangling. The responsibility is not placed upon them to discuss in public these disputed questions, but to submit, with more deference and modesty, to the judgments and opinions of the men, and if they will learn anything of these questions, let them inquire it out of their husbands at home, for it is a shame for a woman to prate and gabble to no profit or edification in the assembly.²

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1. Moffatt, op. cit., p. 233.
2. Loomis, op. cit., p. 13.

A footnote to the above treatment of the passage gives this illustration:

A recently returned missionary from the field where Paul once labored, remarked, 'If the Brooklyn presbytery had been in one of our religious meetings, they would have known what Paul meant. The Greek women are now, as of old, very excitable, perpetually asking questions, given to talking often to the disturbance of the meetings. In plain English, Paul told them to stop their gabble.'¹

Willard quotes the ideas a Congregational pastor has in the advocacy of women ministers:

1. Passages of scripture used to prove that women shouldn't preach do not so directly apply to preaching as to teaching, and if these are literally enforced after some methods of interpretation, they prove too much and would silence every Sunday School teacher and even the public school teacher.

2. Woman's active work in teaching, lecturing, evangelistic work, etc. has been a necessity of God's providence. She has not simply chosen it, but she has had to do it, to meet the most powerful conviction of her mind. Does God work, in His providence, against His word?

3. Where women have preached, no harm has come to the spirit or progress of the gospel, but the opposite.

4. The strongest passages against women are quoted from St. Paul, yet he actually made provision for their work which shows that the said passages, and all others of similar

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1. Ibid.

import, have local and other applications.¹

Hays sums up his discussion with a warning to predetermined, prejudiced absolutism:

No assumption can be more unscriptural and sophistical than that which asserts that, so long as there is any doubt about woman's right to speak, she is bound to be silent. It is not 'safe to be silent but perilous to speak.' When Moses was ordered to go to speak to Pharaoh, it was not safe for him to be silent, however he may have doubted his fitness. Jonah tried the plan of refusing to speak, and was sharply reproved. In the description of the judgment day, as much is said of the sin of not doing one's duty as of doing what was forbidden.²

3. I Timothy 2:11,12.

a. Negative Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

The Biblical commentators surveyed for this study do not treat this passage from I Timothy in as complete or detailed a manner as they did the passages from I Corinthians.

Ellicott writes:

It is obvious that the Apostle's previous instructions, I Corinthians 14:31 ff. are here again in his thoughts. . . . Women were permitted, however, to teach privately those of their own sex. . . . Every form of public address or teaching is clearly forbidden as at variance with woman's proper duties and destination.³

Horton agrees with this interpretation:

In I Corinthians the woman must keep silence because the law required it. Here Paul is represented as

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1. Willard, op. cit., p. 89.
2. Hays, op. cit., p. 84.
3. C. J. Ellicott: A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, pp. 34-35.

forbidding it himself. . . The teaching forbidden to women is only that in the public assembly; other teaching is permitted.¹

A rather light estimation of the present-day validity of this negative viewpoint is taken by Horton who writes that happily Scripture as a whole, and even Paul in other passages, puts the woman in a very different place. According to this author, "our Lord has raised her to a dignity no asceticism can tarnish, and no prejudice can ultimately obscure."² In his opinion, some allowance must be made for the personal element in Paul's writings. He continues:

If he had ever been married, he had no wife as a companion and friend; and in hardly any great man does woman seem to have had so small a part. To use him as an argument for the depreciation or suppression of women is to seize on his infirmities and limitations as a man, and to make them points in his authority as an apostle.³

Horton then concludes that as it could be no genuine reason for keeping woman in subjection, even if Eve was created after Adam, and if she was the cause of his fall, so it can be no decisive prohibition of her speaking and teaching, that Paul, from special circumstances, or from a certain interpretation of the law, which he did not in other respects allow to be binding, was led to prohibit her speaking and teaching in the

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1. Robert Horton: The Pastoral Epistles, pp. 101-102.
2. Horton, op. cit., p. 102.
3. Ibid.

churches in his time. "The important question," this writer states, "is not, Does Paul prohibit women from teaching? but Does the Spirit of God use them as teachers?"¹

b. Conditional Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

Scott writes, in his interpretation of this passage from I Timothy that the part of women "in the service is a silent one, but they too are to have the spirit of prayer, and to show it in their whole demeanour."² Later in his discussion he goes into more detail concerning Paul's probable true opinion. "A woman must listen quietly with all submission." Of this verse he believes that there is perhaps a suggestion that she may learn very little from the masculine wisdom, and may feel inclined to question it. But even then she must repress herself and be silent.

Of this verse, "allow no women to teach or dictate to men," Scott writes:

The rule is laid down authoritatively in the name of the great apostle, but is doubtful whether Paul would have expressed himself so strongly. Priscilla was one of the most valued of his colleagues, and was the teacher of the learned and eloquent Apollos. Euodias and Syntyche are commended as 'women who toiled with me in the message.' Although women were forbidden in I Corinthians to put themselves forward at the public meeting, it is assumed that they take their part with the men in praying and prophesying. Perhaps in the present passage the word 'teach' is to be taken in the technical sense of making a set public address. The reference is to 'dictating' or 'domineering' has also to be

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1. Ibid., p. 103.

2. E. F. Scott: The Pastoral Epistles, p. 25.

understood in its context. Women are to keep silent in the meeting and not to pose as men's superiors by laying down the law to them.¹

Humphreys is very indefinite as to his opinion on the subject of the prohibition or advocacy of the active public work of women in the Christian ministry. He writes simply:

The reference is still to the public assemblies. The exact rendering in our idiom of the article is with the Revised Version: Let a woman learn, in silence, in quiet; as in verse 2, lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.²

Plummer, likewise, offers no definite statement as to his interpretation or the implication of this passage. He says merely that just as the men have to take care that their attitude of body and mind is such as benefits the dignity of public worship, in like manner the women also have to take care that their presence in the congregation does not seem incongruous. They must come in seemly attire and with seemly behaviour. Everything that would divert attention from the service to themselves must be avoided.³

In the Abingdon Bible Commentary Lowstuter writes in agreement with the above ideas. He interprets Paul as reminding his readers that

a Christian woman's best adorning, her finest

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1. Ibid., p. 26.
2. A. E. Humphreys: The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, p.99.
3. Alfred Plummer: The Pastoral Epistles, p. 100.

testimony to the gospel and her best way of making religion attractive, is not costly apparel, precious jewels or modish appearance, but good works, winsome womanliness and godliness of character.

To quote Lowstuter again:

Paul shares the thought of his age in relation to women. They are not to aspire to leadership, to preach or teach nor to take precedence over men. This is prudential advice dictated by the needs of the age for the good of the cause, and to be revised when the good of the same cause justifies it. It is to be remembered that Paul employed and commended Priscilla, Phoebe, and other women helpers.¹

c. Positive Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

Some background material is given by Loomis in the opening paragraphs of his discussion on I Timothy 2:11 and 12. He writes that Timothy was probably at Ephesus when this epistle reached him. This city is described as somewhat uproarious, under the influence of Demetrius, whose women were a little inclined to the same habits of insubordination as their sisters in Corinth. According to this author, it does not appear, however, that this direction to Timothy had any reference whatever to their speaking in public, but to their general deportment at home, abroad, everywhere.²

Robinson agrees with this last statement concerning the place of the application of this advice of Paul's, and says that it is primarily an injunction respecting

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1. Lowstuter in Abingdon Bible Commentary, edited by F. C. Eiselen, Edwin Lewis and David G. Downey, p. 1280.
2. Loomis, op. cit., p. 14.

her personal behaviour at home, which stands in connection with precepts respecting her apparel and her domestic position, especially her relation to her husband. No one supposes that Paul forbids a woman to 'teach' absolutely and universally. Even objectors would allow her to teach her own sex in private; they would let her teach her servants and children, and perhaps her husband too.

He concludes that the teaching therefore which is forbidden, is not every kind of gospel teaching, any more than, his prohibition of speaking applied to every kind of speaking in the Church; but it is such teaching that is domineering, and as involves the usurpation of authority over the man.

Loomis writes further:

If this passage be not a prohibition of every kind of teaching, we can only ascertain what kind of teaching is forbidden by the modifying expressions with which *διδάσκειν* stands associated,--may be public, reiterated, urgent, comprehend a variety of subjects, provided it be not dictatorial, domineering, nor vociferous, for then, and then only, would it be incompatible with her obedience.¹

Taft sums up his interpretation, which is basically the same as that given above: "I suffer not a woman to teach by usurping authority over the man."² Booth writes along the same lines:

This refers to an ignorant or unruly woman trying to force her opinions on the man whether he will or

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1. Ibid.
2. Taft in Booth, op. cit., p. 109.

no. It has no reference to good women living in obedience to God and to their husbands, or to women sent out to preach the gospel by the call of the Holy Spirit.¹

An exegetical and contextual treatment of the passage is presented by Loomis:

'I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting,' (*διαλογισμου*)--questioning disputing. 'In like manner also (and to the same end) that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety . . . with good works.' The 11 and 12, 'Let the women learn in silence.' Not *σιγατωσαν* keep silence, as in Corinthians, but *ἡσυχία*, quietness, tranquillity. It might have no reference whatever to public speaking, but freedom from all excitement, with subjection.²

Loomis translates verse 12: "I suffer not, turn, or place not upon the woman the responsibility to teach." He explains that the word used here is not λαλεῖν so the argument from that word has no pertinency. The related word is that of teacher, who was a master or one in authority, the president of the assembly, the bishop or the overseer of the church--and his teaching was authoritative as asserting and defending the doctrines of the Church. In proof of his interpretation Loomis quotes the next Scriptural phrase, "nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in quietness." This writer concludes:

To the Corinthian woman the injunction is silence from wrangling, subjection; here it is freedom from authoritizing, 'quietness, a kind of positive and negative form of asserting the same thing.³

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1. Booth, op. cit., p. 110.
2. Loomis, op. cit., p. 14.
3. Ibid.

C. Indirect Hortatory Passages of Scripture

There are other passages of Scripture used as part of the foundation of both the negative and positive interpretations of the Biblical teaching on the active ministry and ordination of women. These, however, are not so widely studied and quoted and do not apply so directly to the problem as do the three passages in I Corinthians and I Timothy just treated at length. The Biblical incidents and Scriptural references which are general statements of Christian principle, life or thought, and which are considered by either pro or con groups as containing relevant implications, will be included in the following section of this survey.

1. Negative Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

Dabney writes concerning the idea of equality in Christ, which the supporters of women ministers always hold up as a major tenet in their stand. He disagrees completely with a positive interpretation, and says:

It means equality in privilege of redemption, not official positions in the church. . . Only with this explanation can we keep Paul from self-contradiction. . . the female is excluded in the same way as polygamists, neophytes, and little children.¹

Other writers agree that those who conclude that

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1. Dabney, op. cit., pp. 100-102.

a woman has an equal right to preach, pray or otherwise lead in worship services are falsely interpreting the Scriptures. Massie, for example, writes of this as a "premature and pernicious application to social conditions of the spiritual principle of Christian liberty and equality."¹

To those who quote Bible verses indicating not only the right but the ability and fitness of women to serve as ministers, and who also cite modern examples of successful women in this field, Dabney replies:

This is an irreverent sin which involves the presumption of Uzziah. . . presumptuously setting the human wisdom above God's wisdom.²

The Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus are used by many to prove that neither the Apostle nor the Scriptures as a whole approved at all of the idea of women ministers. The references in I Timothy 3:2-5 and Titus 1:6 to the wife of a bishop is said by Routh to exclude all women from being bishops or church leaders, since they can't have wives.³

2. Positive Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

In refutation of the idea of the superiority of man and the inferiority of woman derived from the Creation story, Hays writes that woman was made as a helpmeet for man and as a part of himself, and there is not one single word, previous to the fall, indicating bondage or servitude or

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1. Massie, op. cit., p. 34.
2. Dabney, op. cit., pp. 101-102.
3. Routh, op. cit., p. 1.

any inferiority other than official subordination. He mentions that Adam named woman precisely the same name by which he himself was called, with the single distinction of sex. In Hebrew ish is man, and the name Adam gave to woman was ishah; precisely as we say prophetess or duchess or deaconess. He adds:

But what is still more remarkable is that when God came to name them He called them both by the same name, Adam. Genesis 5:2, 'In the day that God created. . . and called their name Adam. .'¹

Along the same lines Hays writes of the Fall of man in which the sentence of punishment is generally assumed to be final and conclusive as condemning woman to this condition of subjection: "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This punishment has come upon the sex wherever the race has been left in sin. He asks this vital question: When the plan of salvation was provided for the race, was it so provided that it tended measurably to relieve the race from every other form of the curse, and yet required the Church of God to enforce on woman this part of the curse? Hays stresses the fact that if we insist on impartiality, the church is bound to see to it that no man shall eat his bread except he has earned it 'by the sweat of his face.' It is also significant to him that at the Fall, the promise

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1. Hays, op. cit., p. 8.

of a seed to bruise the serpent's head was made to woman, while nothing was said of it either to man or of man.

He writes: "The intimation of a Redeemer was in accordance with the historical fact that the Redeemer was born of woman. He redeems womanhood."¹

Willard also writes of the Genesis story, in which God says to Cain of Abel, "Unto thee be his desire"--yet we do not find here divine authorization of an elder brother's supremacy. Yet people find the subjection of woman in God's words to Eve. This writer asks what one makes of God's words: "make man in our image, let them have dominion, male and female, etc."²

Crocker mentions the relationship between the Creation and Redemption stories:

She who was condemned to servitude, is now, by the blessing of the dispensation, restored to her original privilege. . . As the woman was first in the transgression, and in some measure the cause of their Fall, she is now, by divine goodness, made the instrument of bringing life and future happiness to mankind.³

The idea of equality in Christ is prominent among those who are in favor of women ministers. Many writers quote the well-known verse: "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."

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1. Ibid.
2. Willard, op. cit., p. 34.
3. H. Mather Crocker: Observations on the Real Rights of Women, p. 13.

To quote Crocker again:

Woman is equal now with man under the Christian system. . . no longer commanded to be slave to man, and he no longer commanded to rule over her. Not slave but friend, partner. . . The offers of divine grace are equally tendered to both male and female, and all have equal right to accept the blessing.¹

Dietrick writes also stressing the same ideas:

His [Jesus'] mere teaching of one moral code for both men and women completely demolishes the lordship-of-man theory, for there must be two separate laws where human beings stand in the attitude of master and slave.²

Again on the comparative view of the sexes, Moore emphasizes the fact that whatever characteristic distinction may exist, whatever inferiority may be attached to women from the slighter frame of her body, or the more circumscribed powers of her mind, or from a less systematic education, or from the subordinate station she is called to fill in life, there is one leading circumstance which raises her importance and even establishes her equality. Christianity has exalted women to true and undisputed dignity in Christ Jesus.³

Against the argument that all the apostles were men, and therefore all ministers today should be men, Hays gives this answer: All the apostles were Jews also. Does that mean that only Jews should be ministers today? "All

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1. Ibid., p. 14.
2. Dietrick, op. cit., p. 19.
3. H. Moore in Crocker, op. cit., p. 23.

the deacons in Acts 6 were men. Was it therefore heresy for the Cenchraean church to make Phoebe a deacon?"¹

Willard writes refuting the same negative argument and demands consistency of definition and application:

There are 30 or 40 passages in favor of woman's public work for Christ, and only 2 against it, and these not really so when rightly understood. But in the face of all these embodied arguments, it is objected that Paul specifies (in I Timothy 2:2) men only as his successors: 'And the things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.' But the word translated 'men' is the same as that in the text, 'God now commandeth men everywhere to repent,' and even the literalists will admit that women are, of all people, 'commanded to repent.'²

The belief that the prohibition of a female ministry is not found in the Scriptures is emphasized by Hays, who writes, for example about Paul's Epistle to the Romans:

It is a well-known systematic statement of Christian truth. Eleven chapters are doctrinal and the last five are practical admonitions. In all these practical discussions, no warning is made against woman's work, but on the contrary, great stress is laid upon it in the last chapter.³

In speaking of those Biblical references which refer to the work of women in the home as wives and mothers and homemakers, Willard agrees that undoubtedly the home is woman's chief sphere; but if remarkable spiritual and intellectual gifts indicate a divine call to any woman

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1. Hays, op. cit., p. 69.
2. Willard, op. cit., p. 34.
3. Hays, op. cit., p. 23.

to be an author, a lecturer, or even a preacher, how is she to find excuse for disobedience to such indications of Providence? No one thinks of denying woman's right to preach in print; why may it not be that some women have a divine call to preach in the pulpit? She says, "Hand in hand, man and woman build the home; hand in hand they ought to build the state and the Church."¹

D. Biographical Passages of Scripture

This section of the study of those Biblical passages used as the foundation or verification of the particular interpretation of the scriptural attitude toward the ordination and work of women in the Christian ministry will include the verses pertaining to the life and work of certain women.

There are two main types of viewpoints here, the negative or conditional, and the positive. Since the references used by each group are not quite the same, and since the references are many although brief, the division of material will be according to viewpoint rather than according to the portion of scripture.

1. Negative or Conditional Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

A survey of the Biblical commentators reveals very little material on the negative side of the biographical

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1. Willard, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

study. References to the women used as "living proof" of the validity and fact of active women workers in the early Church, on the part of the positive advocates, are largely passed over or treated very briefly, with no hint of a possible difference of opinion or implication.

References to women such as Priscilla, the Samaritan woman, Anna and others do not include any indication of interpretation as to a female ministry. A few of the comments on Phoebe will serve as examples of this.

Meyer says in his discussion of Romans 16:1 that she was the "bearer of the epistle probably."¹ Moule writes the same things, and then adds, "Phoebe was in some sense a dedicated helper of the community at Cenchrae."² Kirk calls her a deaconness, servant, "most probably an official title. . . We know nothing of the duties of the office."³

It is pointed out by several authors that all the disciples were men, that Jesus Himself came to earth in the male form, thus showing to all mankind that the spiritual leaders must always be men and not women.⁴

Dabney has written a lengthy, detailed denial of the validity of the arguments of those who hold to the ordination and work of women in the Christian Church. In

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1. Heinrich Meyer: Handbook to the Romans, p. 565.
2. Handley C. G. Moule: Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 245.
3. Kenneth Kirk: The Epistle to the Romans, p. 239.
4. Especially Catholic authors as Clark Adams: The Church and Women.

response to those who hold up Miriam, Huldah, and Anna as examples of prophetesses and maintain that their work proves that sex is no barrier to public work in the church, he writes that this is completely fallacious, unfair reasoning, from the exception to the ordinary rule. He says, "If any of our preaching women will work a genuine miracle, then, and not until then, will she be entitled to stand on the ground of Deborah or Anna."¹

To the argument that the success and spiritual fruits of women ministers prove that their work is according to the will of God, he objects, "God will employ and honor an agency which He Himself makes unlawful." For the great God can and does work through all kinds of heathen to bring about the establishment of His kingdom, even though He does not approve of those through whom He works.

Of the idea that women must obey when they have a definite call to the ministry from God, he writes: "This is a perilous perversion of the true doctrine of vocation. The Spirit never says one thing to the whole Church and another to individuals." Don't take the woman's say-so in the matter.²

2. Positive Viewpoint on Female Ministry.

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1. Dabney, op. cit., p. 96.
2. Dabney, op. cit., pp. 96-118.

There are many more scriptural biographical references used in favor of woman's public work in the church. Hays sums up his attitude toward the woman leaders of the Old Testament:

If in the New Testament, woman is not allowed to do what the providence of God and the call of His people seem to indicate, then we have found one point in sharp distinction from the others, where the New Testament is narrower, more restricted and more in bondage than the Old Testament. The general theory has been that, with the coming in of the New Testament, old burdens were cast off, and liberality and enlargement granted to the church.¹

He cites as Old Testament examples of active women leaders, Deborah, judge the same as Gideon and Ehud, Huldah the prophetess, Miriam the priestess like Moses and Joshua, who also spoke in a mixed assembly.

There are many references to Priscilla as an early Christian leader. The books by Adeney and Dietrick are illustrative of this. The former expresses his opinion and points out the fact that in all these changes and travels Priscilla is the constant companion of her husband. Moreover her name is pointedly associated with his in Christian work, and frequently it is mentioned first. Adeney suggests that it is likely that her name stands before her husband's because she was the more prominent in the service of the gospel, certainly she did take an active share in

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1. Hays, op. cit., p. 15.

that work. He mentions the most brilliant convert to Christianity, with the solitary exception of St. Paul, who owed his enlightenment in no small share to her skilful teaching. For it would have been no easy task to take in hand a man of Apollos' intellectual attainments and independence of character, and lead him on to the views more generally held among the Christians. He continues:

But Priscilla and Aquila undertook this difficult task and succeeded in it. . . And she took a leading part in those conferences. . . It was really Priscilla who influenced the scholarly and gifted Alexandrian, while her husband accompanied her in a secondary position.¹

Dietrick agrees with Adeney that Priscilla appears in the Church of the Apostles as an evangelist, and as the recognized teacher of the man whom Paul specially and emphatically pronounces his own equal.²

Phoebe, "servant of the church at Cenchrea" (Romans 16:1), is often used as biographical proof of official women leaders in the early church. Dietrick writes concerning the meaning of the word for servant, *διδάκωvos*:

A *διδάκωvos* was simply any one of the followers of Jesus less than Jesus Himself, hence the word was subsequently interpreted by the Latin Christians as 'minister' or 'attendant' or 'servant' from the Latin word, 'minus' or 'less.'³

Dietrick describes the many-sided work of

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1. Adeney, op. cit., pp. 242-243.
2. Dietrick, op. cit., p. 29.
3. Ibid.

a *διδάκων* :

1. Each *διδάκων* claimed to be sent as a teacher to mankind by virtue of the knowledge of the teachings of Jesus--hence the word was interpreted by the Greek Christians as 'apostle' or 'one sent,' from *ἀπό* away, and *στέλλω* I send.

2. Each was an evangelist, an announcer of good tidings.

3. Each exercised brotherly or sisterly care over the weak, poor, or afflicted members of the Church--hence was the bishop or presbyter, that is an overseer of those who needed attention and help from a stronger and older member.

4. Each warned the careless of evil result of evil conduct,--hence a prophet, preacher of predictions. All alike prophesied when animated with the spirit of Jesus.

He stresses the fact that "originally no one *διδάκων* was more important than another. It was not the office that exalted the individual, but the individual who magnified the office."¹

In Romans 16:2 Paul writes urging the people there in the church to "assist her in whatever business she hath need of you." Of this request, Booth says:

The Apostle could not have requested more for any one of the most zealous of men preachers.

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1. Ibid., pp. 29-34.

We discern that she had no such trifling position in the primitive church as at the present time attached to deacons and deaconesses in the episcopal church. . . Romans 15:8--'Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister (διδάκων) of the circumcision.' I Corinthians 3:5--'Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers (διδάκοντες) by whom ye believed.' II Corinthians 3:6--'Our sufficiency is of . . . usable ministers (διδάκων) of the New Testament.' II Corinthians 6:4--'In all things. . . the ministers (διδάκοντες) of God.' Theodoret says 'The fame of Phoebe was spoken of throughout the world. She was known not only to the Greeks and Romans, but also to the Barbarians, which implies that she had traveled much and propagated the gospel in foreign countries.'¹

Dietrick exalts most highly the work of Phoebe as he writes:

Phoebe was the bishop of the church in Cenchrea, and that she was both a powerful and useful overseer in the episcopate, Paul testifies in affirming that she had not only been a helper to him but to many others also.²

Anna is mentioned frequently as an example of a woman who publicly prophesied and spoke in the temple. Hays says, "Luke 2:37,38 indicates that it was for a long time her habit in the temple to speak to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."³

Willard speaks of Martha:

In the presence of the multitude He [Jesus] drew from Martha the same testimony that he required of His apostles, and she publicly replied, almost in Peter's very words, 'Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should

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1. Booth, op. cit., pp. 105,106.
2. Dietrick, op. cit., p. 30.
3. Hays, op. cit., p. 17.

come into the world.'¹

The prominence of Lydia in the narrative in Acts 16 seems very significant to some, as revealing the scriptural approval of active Christian business women. Adeney, as well as others, agrees, that "Lydia has the honor of being the first known Christian in Europe."²

Many of the writers in favor of women ministers speak of the emphasis in secular and scriptural history on the work of women in the early Church. Dietrick mentions the earliest reference of Christianity by any Pagan writer which is found among the letters of Pliny, the Younger, in the second century. Sent by the Emperor Trajan to investigate the doings of the Christians, Pliny reported, officially, that he found women in the ministry of the church.³

Ady agrees on this point and draws attention to the special prominence given to women in the Gospels . . . it suggests an equality between the sexes which goes beyond anything found in the Old Testament.⁴

Concerning the passage in Romans 16, Dietrick writes:

Paul indicates the equality of male and female apostles by mentioning in one and the same category, Priscilla and Aquila, Andronicus and Junia, Mary,

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1. Frances W. Willard: Woman in the Pulpit, p. 40.
2. Adeney, op. cit., p. 222.
3. Dietrick, op. cit., p. 31.
4. Ady, op. cit., p. 12.

Herman, etc.,--mingling male and female apostles indiscriminately. The significance of this category is fully revealed only when we remember that Hermas has since figured largely as an 'Apostolic Father.'¹

On this same passage, Booth comments concerning the identity of Junia or Junias in verse seven, which reads, "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." This writer says that there is no various reading but the Greek accusative may belong to either Junia (feminine) or Junias (masculine). Chrysostom and Theophylact, who were both Greeks and consequently knew their mother tongue better than our translators, say Junia was a woman. Justin Martyr, who lived until about A.D. 150, says in his dialogue with Trypho, the Jew,

that both men and women were seen among them who had the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit of God, according as the prophet Joel had foretold, by which he endeavored to convince the Jews that the latter days were come.²

Reference in Booth is also made to I Thessalonians which speaks of Timothy as Paul's "fellow-laborer in the gospel," and Philippians 4:3 which refers to women workers in the same manner, "fellow laborers in the gospel."³ Ady mentions Eudia and Syntyche who "labored in the gospel" according to Acts 18:26.⁴

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1. Dietrick, op. cit., pp. 30,31.
2. Booth, op. cit., p. 109.
3. Ibid.
4. Ady, op. cit., p. 12.

Most of those authors who are in favor of women ministers emphasize the attitude of Jesus toward women. Southard, for example, states this:

Jesus treated women not as creatures of their relationships but as persons in themselves. He must then have regarded them as capable of full intellectual and spiritual apprehension.¹

Booth writes also along the same line that Jesus did not manifest horror at female publicity in His cause as many of His professed people appear to entertain in these days. No intimation of His reproving the Samaritan woman for her public proclamation of Him to her countrymen; nor of rebuking the women who followed Him amidst a taunting crowd on the way to the cross.²

Hays agrees with the above statements: "No hint or word is found in the biographies of Christ expressing disapprobation of womanly activity."³

Southard speaks again of the woman of Samaria, and the significance of her experience with Jesus, as related in John 4:

The Samaritan idea of the Messiah, while incomplete, was free from the false associations it had among the Jews. Therefore it was safe for Jesus to reveal Himself here as it was not in Judea, and this He now does.⁴

Farrar adds:

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1. M. M. Southard: The Attitude of Jesus Toward Woman, p.24.
2. Booth, op. cit., p. 111.
3. Hays, op. cit., p. 17.
4. Southard, op. cit., p. 30.

The first full clear announcement by Himself of His own Messiahship was made by a well side in a weary noon to a single obscure Samaritan woman. And to this poor sinful stranger had been uttered words of immortal significance to which all future ages would listen as it were with hushed breath and on their knees.¹

Ady quotes the findings of the report of the Lambeth Conference in 1920: "'Women enjoyed the closest intimacy with Christ and were used by Him as instruments for the spread of the Gospel.'"²

The narrative in Matthew 28:9,10 is cited by Booth as an example of Jesus' encouragement of the public Christian witness of women: Jesus said to the two Marys, "All hail! Go and tell!" The author explains that this indicates three important things:

1. It was the first announcement of the glorious news to the lost world and the company of forsaking disciples.

2. It was as public as the nature of the case demanded, and was intended to be published to the ends of the earth.

3. Mary was expressly commissioned to reveal the fact to the disciples--their teacher on that memorable occasion.³

Hays comments on Acts 8:4 as indicating the public

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1. Frederic W. Farrar: Life of Christ, Vol. I, p. 213.
2. Ady, op. cit., p. 12.
3. Booth, op. cit., p. 114.

ministry of women in the Apostolic Church:

Those who 'were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.' That women were included in this is evident from the preceding verse, which definitely states that Saul as he made havoc of the church, entered into every house, and hailing men and women, committed them to prison. If the women were not active in the work, there would have been no reason for his persecution of them.¹

Many of the positive writers proclaim the fact that spiritual power was given alike to the men and the women. As Ady says:

There seems reason to believe that the Apostolic Commission recorded in John 20:19-23 was given not to the eleven only, but to the company of men and women in the upper room, who represented the whole Christian Church.²

E. Summary

This chapter has included a survey of the viewpoints of twenty-seven commentators on the Scripture passages relevant to the question of the ordination of women, and mentioned in the previously discussed attitudes of the denominations and literature. Seven writers were studied who believed in a negative viewpoint, nine on the conditional side, and eleven with the positive attitude.

The following statements sum up the writings of these commentators:

1. There are many indirect hortatory and

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1. Hays, op. cit., p. 22.
2. Ady, op. cit., p. 12.

biographical "proof texts" used by the supporters of a female ministry, but very few mentioned by the negative group.

2. Twenty-six of the writers based their viewpoint directly on the inspired authority of the Scriptures, while one author felt that the negative attitude of Paul was to be disregarded as valid for today.

3. Most of the commentators made an effort to be logical and consistent in their discussion of Biblical passages, for example, two commentators insisted upon complete consistency of definition, while two writers held weak, inconsistent ideas.

4. One of the negative authors was extremely vehement in his denunciation of positive ideas, while another warned against predetermined, prejudiced absolutism.

5. Seven of the commentators on the conditional and positive sides made considerable use of background material and description of customs in explaining their viewpoint; none of the negative writers did so to any extent.

6. Six of the conditional and positive writers used the original Greek in outlining their arguments, while none of the negative commentators did so.

7. In interpreting one passage of Scripture, twenty-two of the authors made reference to other Scriptures.

8. There is great variation in the interpretation of details even among those who arrived at the same conclusions.

9. Some writers who used the same arguments or interpretation of details arrived at widely varying conclusions.

CHAPTER IV
GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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A. Summary of Procedure and Findings

The objective of this survey has been the desire to discern what people today are thinking about the ordination of women in the Protestant ministry. Study has been made of the positive and negative aspects of the question, and the reasons presented for each point of view.

Chapter One consists of a survey of twenty-one present-day denominational viewpoints. The churches selected for study fall into two categories: the major denominations, those church groups with membership of over one million, and the minor denominations, of which ten were chosen as representative of the entire group. These latter churches were selected on the basis of the classification in Clark's The Small Sects in America, and with the attempt to work with an adequate cross-section of the various doctrinal and organizational attitude groups.

Letters were written to each of the denominational headquarters requesting an official statement on the church stand in regard to the ordination of women ministers. The answers plus church year books, reports, and unpublished material served as the basis for the following findings:

1. Of the denominations in the United States, a 2 per cent majority is against the ordination of women.

2. There is great variation in denominational viewpoint and action, in definition of terms such as "ordination," and in reasons for the attitudes.

3. The denominations are responsible for very little official propaganda or statements, and have very few well-defined reasons for their attitudes.

4. There is today no significant ratio between the size of the denomination and its viewpoint on this question, although in the past more of the larger denominations were in opposition while a majority of the smaller groups were on the positive side.

Chapter Two reports a study made of the viewpoints in current literature on this controversial subject. The material surveyed includes magazine articles, news items, books and pamphlets written in the past decade. The total number of writings is twenty-four, sixteen magazine and newspaper articles, three books and five pamphlets. Each has been classified according to type of literature, viewpoint and reasons given. The findings in Chapter Two may be summarized as follows:

1. Ninety-six per cent of the current literature is open-minded or on the positive side.

2. The majority of literary writings on the subject of the ordination of women has masculine authorship,

regardless of the viewpoint of the writer.

In Chapter Three the interpretations of the relevant Scripture passages mentioned in Chapters One and Two were examined. A study was made of the three general groupings of the pertinent portions of Scripture: direct hortatory (those major passages which form the basis for the primary arguments on this subject), indirect hortatory (verses of Scripture whose implications are used in the promotion of the various opinions), and biographical references (verses indicating or describing the active ministry of certain women).

There are three distinct viewpoints concerning these Scriptural references:

1. The negative advocates believe that the teachings and practices of the Bible clearly prohibit the work and ordination of women in the Christian ministry.

2. The conditional interpreters believe either that

- a. The New Testament in general suggests the prohibition of women's work in public ministry, but in exceptional cases, approves the preaching of women under the overpowering influence of the Holy Spirit; or

- b. The New Testament in general approves the public ministry of women, but in certain circumstances, because of local custom, suggests its prohibition.

3. The positive advocates believe that the

teachings, practice and spirit of the New Testament clearly approve and advocate the public leadership of women in the Christian ministry.

B. Concluding Observations

This survey by no means has been exhaustive or final. Many more denominational and individual viewpoints could be studied, and the development of attitude and thought in literature as well as in the churches could be traced. Also a comparative study of ideas and practices in various countries could be carried out. However, the following concluding observations may be drawn, representing the material studied and indicative of the thought trend of our day.

1. There is great variation in viewpoint, ranging from completely negative to completely positive attitudes, with many positions in between.

2. Most individuals hold definite opinions on the subject, although few have ever carefully studied the ordination of women.

3. A small majority of the denominations is against the ordination of women, while a large majority of current literature is open-minded or on the positive side.

4. The reasons in favor of women ministers are given in much greater detail than those against them, and

with extended use of Greek exegesis and background material.

5. Most of the viewpoints on the Scriptural interpretation accept its final and inspired authority, although three sources mention the "out-dated, biased viewpoint of Paul" which should be ignored.

6. There is great variation in conclusions even among those who use the same arguments, and conversely, those who hold the same conclusions often do so on the basis of widely incompatible reasons.

7. The most frequently mentioned reasons for the prohibition of the ordination of women are that it is contrary to Scriptural teaching and tradition.

8. The most frequently cited bases for defending the ordination of women are the spirit and practice of the New Testament, and the examples of effective, Spirit-filled ministries of contemporary women.

9. There is an appreciable difference between the theoretical acceptance of women ministers and their actual opportunity to hold pastorates.

10. Women ministers are usually sent to the poorest churches with the most meager salaries.

11. There is a special antagonism toward women ministers that is not felt toward women in other professions.

12. There is an increasing number of women in full-time professional Christian work, including the

pastorate.

In addition to the above, two general conclusions will be noted:

1. The world is becoming increasingly conscious of the problem of the work of women in the Christian ministry, especially in reference to ordination in the ministry, and thorough unbiased investigation of the question is being carried out by various groups.

2. The general trend of thought and action on the subject of the ordination of women, as revealed in denominational action, current literature, and individual viewpoints, is toward the positive side of accepting women on an equal basis with male ministers.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

COPY OF LETTER SENT OUT

422 West 57 Street
New York 19, New York
December 20, 1950

Northern Baptist Convention
Rev. J. C. Hazen, Corresponding Secretary
152 Madison Avenue
New York 16, New York

Dear Rev. Hazen:

Would you be willing to cooperate in conducting a survey to determine present-day attitudes of representative Christian churches on the subject of the ordination of women in the Protestant ministry?

I am conducting this survey as an aid in writing my thesis which will be in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology at the Biblical Seminary in New York.

The Northern Baptist Convention has been chosen as one of the representative churches since it is a major denomination in the United States with more than one million members.

Will you be kind enough to answer the following questions concerning your denominational viewpoint?

1. What is the official viewpoint of your church toward the ordination and/or work of women in the Christian ministry? (Such as negative, positive, conditional).
2. What reasons are the basis for the above viewpoint? (Both from New Testament and practical reasons).
3. What official action has been taken by the church on the subject of women's work in the church? (Such as conferences, council meetings, etc.).
4. What church literature and publications contain material on the subject?
5. If the church has women ministers at the present time, how many? What is the name and address of one of these women?

Your early cooperation in answering these questions

Rev. J. C. Hazen

-2-

December 20, 1950

will be very much appreciated.

Thank you for your helpfulness in this vital and
timely survey.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Joyce Morey Smith
422 West 57 Street
New York 19, New York