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By J. B. Hawthorne

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Do the Scriptures permit women to speak in mixed assemblies? "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (I Cor. 14:34-38).

"Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Tim. 2:11-14).

If through God's infinite mercy, I am ever permitted to see the face of the apostle Paul, I shall feel that I owe him an humble apology for having many times tried to believe, that in some unaccountable way he had made a prodigious mistake, and inflicted on woman a cruel injustice in forbidding her to speak in the church. My sympathies, my prejudices and three-fourths of my reading and thinking have been on the woman's side of this question. But the conflict is over. After a long and painful struggle I have made an unconditional surrender to conscience and Paul and the Holy Ghost.

What do the Scriptures teach upon this subject? The discussion must be limited to this single question. Your feelings, the opinions of men, and the spirit of the nineteenth

century cannot be admitted into this controversy. It is a subject upon which God has spoken, and we cannot array human opinion, or human feeling against his truth, without aligning ourselves with Robert G. Ingersoll and his followers.

On the question now before us, we find in this "Book by inspiration given", a thus saith the Lord. "Let the women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak." By these words Baptists have stood through all the centuries of their existence, and by them they will continue to stand "till time's last thunder shakes the world."

1. It is claimed by some, not many, that the apostle Paul did not intend to forbid women to take in any serious discussion, but to prohibit them from indulging in idle chatter.

In answering this view, Dr. Broadus, one of the greatest teachers of New Testament Greek, says; "The word which commonly means to talk, to speak, is sometimes used in classical Greek for chattering, and is sometimes applied to animals. But there are no clear examples of any such use in Biblical Greek, and the word is applied to apostles, Saviour, God"

If there is any authority for translating the Greek so as to make the passage read, "It is not permitted unto them to chatter", there is the same authority for saying, that Paul chattered to the Athenians, or that Christ chattered to the multitudes.

2. Others claim that Paul's prohibition is limited to speaking in the church, and that while it would be unlawful for women to speak in a church, it is permissible in a prayer meeting. In answer to this it is sufficient to say, that a meeting of this congregation for prayer, is just such a meeting of the church, as a meeting to hear the preaching of the gospel. The word church was applied by the New Testament writers to meetings in private houses.

3. There are some who contend that Paul could not have forbidden to speak upon religious subjects in meetings of the church, because there were prophetesses in those days, and such were allowed to speak. There is no conclusive evidence to show that either Christian or Jewish prophetesses delivered their prophecies before public assemblies. Do the women of this day, who go into mixed assemblies and speak, claim to be prophets? Do they claim that what they say is a revelation from God? If they do, and their claim be true, their utterances should be written down and incorporated with the other sacred

Scriptures. If they are indeed prophets, inspired and accredited as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Peter, Paul and John were, then we have abundant material to make a new Bible every week. But are they prophets? They cannot be if Paul has spoken the mind of God. What does he say? Immediate conception with these words forbidding women to speak in the church, he says: "If any man thinketh himself a prophet, or spiritual let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." He makes the acknowledgement of his inspiration the test of their claim, not only to the gift of prophecy, but to any spiritual gift. They may sincerely believe themselves to be spiritual, but if they refuse to acknowledge his authority, he says they are not spiritual. Now where there Women Speaking in Mixed Assemblies by J. B. Hawthorne – Page 2 is this conflict between Paul and the women what shall I do? What ought I to do? The Lord knows how distressful it is for me not to go with the women. Without their sympathy and fellowship this world would be to me a solitude. But having Adam's experience before me, how foolish it would be for me to follow these daughters of Eve in violating a law as simple and legible as God could make it.

4. The position on which the advocates of this new doctrine and practice rely more than any other, and to which they cling with greatest persistence, is that the law which Paul lays down in this letter to the Corinthians, was intended only for the Corinthian church—that it was purely a local regulation made necessary by a peculiar and exceptional state of things among the Christians of Corinth.

This position is utterly untenable. Anyone can see at a single glance that Paul did not make this law for the Corinthian women only. He wrote the same thing to Timothy that he might apply it to the churches in the region about Ephesus. In his letter to Timothy he assigns two reasons for not permitting to teach and pray in a mixed assembly.

(1) "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Now, the Corinthians were not the only people in the world who had descended from Adam and Eve. I trust that the members of the First Baptist Church have not ceased to believe that even they are the descendants of Adam and Eve. I entreat these female apostles of the new Gospel and new dispensation to permit us to hold to that much of the Bible. If we have descended from Adam and Eve, then Paul's law forbidding women to speak in

mixed assemblies was not local, and is binding on the women of "all the churches."

"Adam was first formed." The man was formed out of the dust of the earth. The woman was formed out of the man. She was formed for him, for his help and companionship. Here lies the strength of the reason which the apostle gives for the divine law that woman shall be in subjection to the man. She is to be in subjection to the man, not so much because she was made after the man, for she and the man were both created after the beasts of the field, but because she was made out of the man, and for the man. So the woman's subjection to the man, is according to the laws of nature and creation.

Now Paul says when a woman goes to church and teaches or preaches in the presence of men, she reverses God's order and violates the laws of her own nature and creation. "I suffer not a woman to teach or usurp authority over the man." Teaching implies authority over those who are taught, and as a woman has not, according to God's economy, authority over the man, she is not permitted to stand up in a public assembly and teach. God knows that millions of women have the ability to teach men; but he does not permit them to do it, at least in a public way, because it has the appearance of authority.

(2) The second reason Paul had for prohibiting women from speaking in mixed assemblies was, that Adam was not deceived; but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. If that was a sufficient reason for not permitting the women to speak in the church at Corinth, it is a sufficient reason for the same regulation in the First Baptist Church of Atlanta. The women to whom I speak today are just as much involved in the consequences of Eve's conduct as the women to whom Paul spoke and wrote. "Our mother took the poisonous cup and tainted all our blood."

"Adam was not deceived." This positive assertion is to be taken without limitations or qualifications. Adam was not deceived at all. He was not deceived by the serpent with whom he had not talked, nor was he deceived by his wife. He knew what he was doing. He knew what would be the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit. He understood God's law. He knew that the violation of it would bring death to him, to Eve, and all their countless posterity. He ate because his wife had eaten it and became mortal, and he loved her so well that he would rather die with her, than be left alone in

the world. Inasmuch as he sinned wilfully, and against light and knowledge, without any deception, his sin was greater than hers, and his punishment more severe. But the woman was deceived. She really thought the serpent spoke the truth, and that she and her husband should not die if they ate of the fruit.

"And the serpent said unto the woman: Ye shall not die, for God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." That was what caught the dear woman. She wanted to know as much as God, so that she might be independent of Him. That was what caught her, and there she has shown her weakness ever since. She wants to know too much. She is restive under her sense of inferiority to anyone. Out of this natural weakness grows her insubordination to Paul.

When a woman looks upon a thing, and is pleased with, charmed by it, she believes it to be right, no matter what the authorities say about it. Bear with me, gentle sisters, while I suggest some of the natural infirmities of your sex. The infirmities of your brothers are much more serious.

In these latter days, when, according to prophecy, all manner of strange things must occur, it has appeared unto some women that it would be pleasant and beautiful for them to step out of their divinely appointed sphere, and do some of the things which God has committed solely to men. Some invisible artist has set before their mind's eye pictures of women in the pulpit, women on the rostrum, women at the ballot-box, women on the Judge's bench, and women in the halls of Congress. These pictures have charmed them, bewitched them, and thus deceived. They have reached the conclusion that the Bible and God's order need amendment; and one of the amendments which they propose is, to strike out from the Divine Book Paul's words forbidding a woman to speak in the church. Paul bases this law upon the fact that the man was not deceived, and the woman was deceived. Well, what has that to do with a woman preaching? It has a great deal to do with it. Basing his prohibitory law upon the fact that she was deceived, he means that a creature who can be made to believe that a law signifies something radically different from its obvious meaning, or that it is wise and good in some things to disobey the Almighty, cannot be safely trusted with the office of the Christian ministry.

God said unto woman, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

That was God's punishment of woman for the part she took in the first transgression. Has it been removed? Is it not just as real today as it was thousands of years ago? It remains, and will remain till the end of time, to remind woman how the devil beguiled her and robbed her of her innocence.

Now Paul says that his law forbidding women publicly to teach men is based upon the sentence which God pronounced against woman in the garden. Has that sentence been revoked? If it has been annulled, who did it, and when and where was it done? The curse upon the serpent remains. The curse upon the man continues. Why should woman's curse be removed? What evidences have we that the disabilities imposed upon her in Eden have been cancelled? The Bible contains no such doctrine. Jesus Christ and His apostles did not teach it. Woman's sorrow has not been removed and the law putting her in subjection to man has never been repealed.

Under the old Jewish dispensation there were no female priests, and women were not allowed to speak in the synagogue in any capacity. Christ did not interfere with this regulation. In organizing His own dispensation He said nothing and He did nothing to warrant a departure from the Jewish doctrines and practices in reference to women. He chose twelve apostles. There was not a woman among them. Among the seventy whom He commissioned to preach there was not a woman.

Brethren, do you appeal from the authority of this divine book? If you do not the question is settled, and the uniform practice of the churches from the apostles till now must stand.

It is due to the Christian women of the nineteenth century, that only a few of them comparatively, have joined this rebellion against God's order. The great mass of them are content to remain in the sphere prescribed for them by the precepts of the Bible, and the laws of their own nature.

In the field of Christian activity there are tasks for woman that are great enough to tax her utmost capacity, and high enough to satisfy every lawful aspiration of her soul. Within the great circle of her own sex, she is permitted to teach, admonish and exhort to her heart's

content.

I have always had some sympathy with Adam, because I know the bewitching power of female eloquence. It requires a desperate struggle of the will to overcome it. Women are naturally so much better than men, so much gentler and kinder and sweeter, that men are apt to think it a virtue to yield to them, even when they know them to be in error.

But he is woman's best friend who dares to oppose her in a wrong course. He is most loyal to woman's welfare, happiness and honor, who is most persistent and determined in his efforts to deter her from those undertakings that are incompatible with the laws of her being. Woman, self-willed, contentious, arrogant, noisy, combative, is a hideous monstrosity. There is nothing on earth, or under the earth that has less attraction for a right-minded, true-hearted, manly man. But woman clothed with purity, modesty, humility, a gracious temper and a calm spirit; woman cultured in mind and heart, and lovingly and loyally moving in her divinely appointed orbit, is exalted to her highest estate, and in that estate is man's angel, a wayside sacrament, a handwriting of God, a window opening towards a world of cherubims.

Whence comes this new craze? Whence comes this challenge of apostolic inspiration and authority? Whence comes this clamor for the transmutation of woman? Whence comes this new slogan, "Down with Paul and up with woman?" Whence comes the cry that calls woman to the pulpit, the rostrum, the political caucus, the ballot-box, and the legislative hall? It comes from the same region where every ism that has cursed the country for the last century. It comes from a section which applauded Theodore Parker for saying, "If Jesus Christ did teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, I do not believe it." It comes from a community so tolerant of heresy that a man can be elected to a chair of theology in a college once distinguished for its orthodoxy who says that are three ways to God and heaven—the way of the church, the way of the Bible and the way of reason—and that man is perfectly safe in choosing any one of them. It comes from the birthplace of the new theology, whose liberality is another name for infidelity. I confess I would be less suspicious of it, if it had first seen the light of day on a soil less prolific of evil. From the birth of the republic to the present day, this sunny Southland has been singularly free from that latitudinarianism in religious belief, and that irreverent

spirit towards God's word which has been the blight and mildew of other sections. There has been nothing in our Southern soil and atmosphere to give nutriment to these noxious weeds. Let us abide in the spirit of loyalty to God and His truth. Let us present to these propagandists of a diluted and perverted Christianity an unbroken front and calmly and trustfully to Him, who giveth us the victory, stand with the deathless devotion of martyrs by the old flag of the old faith.

It has been my fear of the sources from which these mischievous innovations come, that has made me, for five years a persistent advocate for the creation of a Southern Baptist literature for Southern Baptist Sunday Schools. Such a literature would do much to keep the South "solid" for all time to come. The South needs to be solid; solid not for sectionalism, but against it; solid for the union our fathers framed; solid for good government; solid against class legislation; solid against laws that are golden girdles for the rich, and galling shackles for the poor; solid for peace and fraternity on the basis of mutual respect and confidence, and equal protection and freedom; but above all solid against looseness of religious belief and practice; solid against every appeal from God's book to the tribunal of human reason, or human consciousness; solid for a living ministry of men whose lips and lives are pure, and who will know among men, but Christ, and Him crucified; solid for God's order in the church and the whole social economy; solid against the folly and sin of robbing woman of her natural modesty, humility, loveliness and dignity by thrusting her out of her native sphere into unnatural relations, and clothing her with functions which she was not born to wear; in a word, solid for God and against everything that is false, and wrong and hurtful to man. Heaven grant that my life be lengthened to see the time when not only the South, but the North, the East, and the West, all this bounteous birth-land of the free, shall have no creed but the Bible, and no Savior but Christ, and when this great people shall consecrate their magnificent resources to the world's redemption!

**IS IT SCRIPTURAL FOR WOMEN TO PREACH,
LEAD MEN AND WOMEN IN PUBLIC PRAYER,
AND MAKE TALKS IN CHURCH? By Roy Mason**

IS IT SCRIPTURAL FOR WOMEN TO PREACH, LEAD MEN AND WOMEN IN PUBLIC PRAYER, AND MAKE TALKS IN CHURCH?

By Roy Mason

A Subject That Needs Restudy

Have Baptists decided to junk the teachings of the New Testament as their standard of faith and practice?

Have they decided that they will take only those Scriptures that coincide with their preconceived wishes and opinions as authoritative, and throw away the rest?

Have they decided to revise the Scriptures so as to make them suit the "trend of the times," and the standards of this world?

It would seem that many of them have.

I could illustrate this by a number of different incidents and I could mention a number of different things in which many Baptist churches have plainly departed from the teachings of the New Testament, but I have in mind just now to mention one matter as illustrative of the charges that I have just brought. The one matter I refer to is The Woman Question.

Baptist churches in some sections ordain women to the ministry!

The Southern Baptist Convention puts women up to speak (or preach, for it is one and the same thing).

Some women missionaries on our Baptist foreign mission fields are carrying on a preaching ministry before mixed audiences of men and women.

W. M. U. secretaries in some states, like Florida for instance, fill the pulpits of churches whenever and wherever there is opportunity.

The women folk have charge of church prayer meetings in many Baptist churches—making talks, leading in prayer, etc.

I often see notice in the papers that Baptist churches here in Tampa have women to speak (preach) at the regular preaching services.

In some conservative quarters women have not been accustomed to exercise such a ministry as is indicated above. Attempt is being made to cast aside the standards of the past and to induct women into these public ministries such as I have just referred to.

WHAT ABOUT ALL THIS?

Plainly it is a reversal of the practice of Baptists and Baptist churches for nearly twenty centuries!

It is a repudiation of the interpretation of the Scriptures offered by the greatest Baptist scholars and exegetes who have lived, and it is a repudiation of the interpretation of the Scriptures offered by the greatest scholars of all denomination of all time.

Or else it is a declaration that it isn't a scriptural matter—that it doesn't matter a rap what the

Scriptures may say—that the Scriptures are not to be considered the authority, but rather the customs of the times and the standards of this world.

Are Baptists prepared to assume this position? Many have assumed it, or so it would seem.

To those who do not believe the Bible and who consequently do not care what it says this article will make no appeal. I am writing mainly for those who have thoughtlessly drifted into the present way of carrying on church life and who have made no real study of the Scriptures concerning the place and ministry of women in the churches. Among these are most preachers and pastors, for it is true that the ministry of our day is more occupied with “Manuals,” and “Seals,” and the organized activities of the “Auxiliaries” than with the study of the Word of God. Now if women ought to preach, deliver addresses before mixed audiences of men and women, lead in public prayer, etc., it is evident that Baptists have misunderstood the Scriptures for the past twenty centuries and that they have grievously wronged millions of women who have lived in the past and who have been denied these privileges. Certainly there are few persons who would charge that our Baptist forefathers deliberately sought to wrong their women folk by withholding from them the right to exercise their Scriptural privileges.

WON'T DISCUSS IT—GET MAD

It seems to me that in view of the Baptist claim that they make the New Testament their rule of faith and practice; in view of the fact of the attitude our Baptist forefathers took; in view of the teachings of our Baptist scholars from time immemorial, it is an exceedingly questionable thing to make changes as Baptists have been making in recent years on the “woman question,” without a careful restudy of the Scriptures. And yet it is the rarest thing to find a preacher or anybody else who advocates a public speaking ministry for women, who is willing to sit down with you and make a careful examination of the Scriptures that bear on the subject. The usual attitude on the part of such is one of impatience, ridicule, jest coupled with entire unwillingness to discuss the question from a Scriptural standpoint.

I want to lay down some self evident propositions:

1—If the Scriptures teach that women should preach, lead in public prayer in mixed assemblies, teach men, etc., then they certainly ought to be encouraged to do it and the more the better.

2—If the Bible prohibits such, then those who encourage women to violate the Scriptures are doing the women folk a great wrong.

3—If the Bible prohibits such and Baptist preachers and churches willfully go contrary to the Word of God, then they had as well surrender their claim that they made the New Testament their rule of faith and practice. Then they have no right to raise their voice against modernists for they are themselves “whittlers of the Word,” just as much as those who whittle out Genesis or any other portions of the Bible.

4—If the Bible prohibits such and Baptists willfully violate the Scriptures, then they may expect

the chastening hand of God upon them and they need not look for His blessings until they forsake their attitude of rebellion and come back to the place where they honor His Word.

5—There is no essential difference between a woman getting up before a mixed audience and delivering a speech, and in preaching what is declared to be a "sermon."

WOMEN PREACHERS PROHIBITED!

I desire to state that if the Scriptures teach anything, they most certainly teach that a woman should not preach, lead in public prayer before mixed audiences, teach men, or take the place in church leadership that the Scriptures assign to men. Anybody who is so devoid of the power to understand the plain simple language of the Bible on these matters is not capable of dealing with the Scriptures.

How am I so absolutely certain that a woman should not preach, or exercise a public ministry as indicated above? I answer just as briefly and to the point as possible.

1—Because Jesus included no women among the preachers that He chose to follow Him, or among the twelve or the seventy whom He sent out.

2—Because there is no record of a woman preacher in all the New Testament. Personal, private witnessing is all that can be made out of the testimony of the women concerning Christ's resurrection, Philip's daughters, etc. No inconsistency in a single case.

3—Because the qualifications laid down in the Scriptures for bishops (or preachers) certainly preclude the female of the species. I Timothy 3:2 says that a preacher is to be "husband of one wife." Until women can measure up to that qualification they are debarred!

4—Because I Timothy 2:8 plainly forbids women leading in public prayer in mixed assemblies. The Greek says, "I will that THE MEN pray everywhere." That is, men as distinguished from women. (That of course has no bearing on women praying privately or in the presence of a group of women).

5—Because the word of God says plainly that women are not to teach men or to usurp authority over them. I Timothy 2:11-12, "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

It takes a moron to be unable to understand such language as this. What does this Scripture teach?

POSITIVELY: (1) She is to be silent. (As regards a public, speaking, teaching, praying ministry, for that is what is under consideration).

(2) She is to "be in subjection," or in other words to accept man's leadership.

NEGATIVELY: (1) She is not to teach men. (That's what it says).—(2) She is not to usurp man's authority. (By taking religious leadership out of his hands).

REASONS FOR THIS: (1) Man's priority in creation (v. 13).

(2) Women's priority and deception in the temptation and sin that ruined the race (v. 14).

6—Because the word of God says plainly that it is not permitted unto women to speak, (in the sense that we are discussing) In the church. I Corinthians 14:34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak."

This 14th chapter of I Corinthians is perfectly clear. Note the following things:

(1) A mixed public assembly is referred to for verse 23 says, "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place."

(2) The kind of "silence" that is enjoined is made clear, for Paul is discussing prophesying, (v. 29) exposition of doctrine (v. 26) interpretation (v. 26) etc.

(3) That Paul is not merely meeting a "local" situation, but is laying down a teaching that applies to all churches is made clear for in verse 34 he says, "churches." In verse 33 he speaks of "all the churches."

(4) That Paul is not speaking as a "crabbed old bachelor" (as some charge) but as the inspired spokesman of God, is made clear, for in verse 37 he says, "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

(5) I have said that it takes a moron to misunderstand these Scriptures. Paul puts it in about the same way for in verse 38 he virtually calls the person who won't be instructed along this line "ignorant."

7—A seventh reason why a woman should not exercise such a public ministry as mentioned above is the fact that the one instance in which a woman is described as teaching a church is an instance that is condemned by the Word of God. Revelation 2:20 says: ". . .I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants—".

What does this say:

(1) It says that the church at Thyatira had a woman in it that "called herself" a prophetess.

(God's Word does not recognize her as such).

(2) It says that she taught the people of that church and led them astray.

(3) It says that the Lord Jesus held it against that church for permitting such a thing.

I could give plenty more reasons for my position on this question if space were available, but until some one is able to show that these Scriptures quoted mean something else than they say so plainly, there will be no need of going any further.

Ere I close I want to say this: I have a church in which the women folk seek to obey the Scriptures along these lines mentioned. We never have any quarrels or dissensions on this matter for our women want to be obedient to the Bible. As a rule when women disobey the Bible along this line they are urged into doing so by the men, and usually by a pastor who is not

willing to take God's Word at face value.

I cannot but feel that God is displeased at the way in which His Word is ignored or else treated with contempt on this question that I have been dealing with. Perhaps the distressing straits in which we find ourselves as a denomination is a mark of God's chastening for the bold defiance of His Word in this matter. Certainly it is worth thinking about.

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