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AN IRRUPTION OF DEPRAVITY  
WOMEN IN THE PULPIT – A PRESBYTERIAN PROTEST

The Presbytery of Brooklyn, the Rev. Dr. J.C. Butler, moderator, has adopted an address to the General Assembly; prepared by the Rev. Dr. T.S. Brown, the Rev. Dr. J. C. Butler and others, earnestly requesting it "to adopt, and to transmit to all the Presbyteries for their approval, such rules as shall oblige all churches under their care, not to license or ordain women to the Gospel ministry and not to allow any woman to teach or preach in pulpits or in the public and promiscuous meetings of the Church of Christ." The request is made for the following reasons: --

1. The function of woman is not to govern officially. She is to be a direct helper, never a principal, in the Church of Christ. She is a helpmeet for man. 2. Woman's function is not to teach officially. The prophets and writers and church instructors of the Bible were all men. There were no female apostles, presbyters, evangelists, pastors, or teachers. There were no females among the seventy sent out by our Lord. There were no female Bishops, and the "angels" of the churches were all men. 3. Government and teaching are inseparable in the church ministry, and both of these functions are prohibited to woman. 4. God has made woman subject to her husband, and "he shall rule over her." This position of woman, by the Divine decree, is absolutely irreconcilable with the prerogatives and functions of the Holy Ministry. If not, then the authority of the husband is above that of the pastor. 5. There is no instance in the Old Testament of the anointing of a woman to the prophetic office, nor to any of the ordinary functions of the Ancient Church., There is no instance on record there of any woman ever having been called to that office. 6. The Gospel commission from the lips of Christ himself to the whole New Testament ministry is to men, and to men alone. 7. The proof the subordinate and auxiliary relation of woman as found in the writings of Moses and Paul. 8. The express prohibition – for reasons universal and permanent – of the inspired Apostle.

Five members of the Presbytery voted against the adoption of this address. – New York Tribune, April 24<sup>th</sup>.

It isn't often we enjoy the refreshing spectacle of people living fully up to the doctrines they preach, but here is an exception. The Presbytery of Brooklyn, not content with preaching the doctrine of total depravity, evidently feel it incumbent upon them to practice it too, and thus become living illustrations of the fact, for the conviction of a skeptical generation. The novel experiment is likely to prove a brilliant success. If any one is hereafter tempted for one moment to doubt the thorough, complete, and total depravity of human nature, let him only be referred to the action of the Brooklyn Presbytery of April, 1872, and he will become quite convinced of his error. If, after eighteen centuries of the working of the leaven of Christianity in human nature, eighteen centuries of the beautiful teachings of Him who said, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." "Whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant." "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you," – if after eighteen centuries of this teaching, the professed disciples of the Great Teacher can issue

such a manifesto as the above, is there any hope for us? Might we not as well at once accept Darwin's theory, and come to the conclusion that we have really and truly descended, in every sense of the word, from apes, monkeys, and orang-outangs?

But let us examine this curious document in detail. "1. The function of woman is not to govern officially." Then how can she ever exercise the duties of a mother, one of the most important of which is to "govern officially?" Of course she cannot be a teacher; and this the gentlemen of the Presbytery are wise enough to see, and bold enough to make their next valiant charge accordingly. "2. Woman's function is not to teach officially." Let us close the doors of our Public Schools, Seminaries, and Sabbath schools at once if men enough cannot be found to fill the places of the women now employed therein! Better the blackest ignorance than that women should "govern" and "teach" "officially!"

"The prophets, writers, and church instructors of the Bible were all men." Did the Presbytery never hear of "Miriam, the prophetess;" "Deborah, a prophetess," who judges Israel (even though she was a *feme couverte* at the time); "Huldah the prophetess" (also a *feme couverte*), who "dwelt in Jerusalem in the college," "Anna, a prophetess," the mother of King Lemuel; Priscilla, or the daughters of Philip? Did it never observe that Peter alluded to the prophesy of Joel, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy," as having been fulfilled in his day?

But "there were no female presbyters." Heaven grant there never may be, if they were to succeed no better than the presbyters of Brooklyn in expounding Christian faith and practice! "There were no females among the seventy sent out by our Lord." How is this fact ascertained? And when ascertained, what is it expected to prove? "The 'angels' of the churches were all men." Speaking of "angels," why in the world didn't it occur to the Brooklyn Presbytery in this connection, to suggest that the angel Gabriel is a man, and also the archangel Michael, and that no female angel is mentioned in the Bible, and that therefore no woman can ever become an angel? This is stronger now, than any argument the conservative forces have produced yet, and I hereby make them a present of it, to help them along! By working it up they may be able to prove that women are not immortal, and haven't any souls; and this is all they need to make their position logical! But to proceed.

3. Government and teaching are inseparable in the church ministry." This will be interesting to laymen, who always supposed they were of some account – whatever they might have thought about lay women. Ministers, it seems, are not only the instructors but the governors of their churches.

4. God has made woman subject to her husband, and "he shall rule over her." If the Mosaic account of the creation is authoritative, God did nothing of the kind; but on the contrary created them free and equal. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." He gave "them" dominion over the lower orders of creation, but neither of them over the other. After the fall, in the nature of a prophesy, the consequences of sin were stated, among which "He shall rule over thee" was one. As well might Judas justify betraying his master by pleading that it was his duty to fulfill the prophesies, as man tyrannize over woman for a similar reason.

5. There is no instance in the Old Testament of the anointing of a woman," etc. There is also "no instance in the Old Testament" of an electric telegraph, steamboat, or printing press; therefore let us renounce them all as delusions of the adversary.

6. The Gospel commission from the lips of Christ himself to the whole New Testament ministry is to men, and to men alone. Also to Jews, and to Jews alone.

Lastly, Moses and Paul are quoted in support of the preceding propositions. This suggests the story of the taciturn Indian, who complained in bitterness of soul that the white people upon whom he called did not treat him to cider, and was advised by a more successful son of the forest to talk Bible to them, and try the effect. Accordingly one cold morning, not long thereafter, found our Indian warming himself at the chimney corner of an old-fashioned New England kitchen. After sitting awhile in profound silence, he suddenly broke forth – "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." No notice being taken of this effort, he repeated it, after waiting a suitable time, slower and more solemnly than before – "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Still no response. Becoming impatient as repeated efforts produced no visible results, he at last exclaimed impatiently, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I tell you!" "Why, what do you mean by saying 'Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,' so often?" was the surprised inquiry. "I mean cider," responded our persevering Indian, coming at last to the point in a manner which could not be mistake. So when men keep repeating "Moses, Paul, the Bible," "Moses, Paul, the Bible," all the time, it is very plain to see that they only "mean cider" in the shape of power, authority and the spoils.

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