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in the distribution of his favors; and he sustains himself by an appeal to the divine record. It is useless to multiply quotations any further. The authors of several books of the Old Testament are unknown; but the record contained in them is never, for this reason, disparaged. All are put on a common basis of divine authority. "What saith the scripture?" With Christ and his apostles this is the end of controversy.

ARTICLE VIII.

THE SILENCE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCHES—OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

BY REV. A. HASTINGS ROSS, SPRINGFIELD, OHIO.

As plausible objections are sometimes urged against the view of the silence of women in the churches, given in the current volume, pp. 336–359, we beg indulgence while we repeat what may be necessary in order to give these objections a full examination, and, as we believe, a conclusive answer. We desire to know the truth; for the truth will make us free.

It is said that we may understand Paul's rules respecting the silence of women in the churches, as given "for his times and circumstances," and not "for all times and circumstances"; that "if he had put in the little clause, 'for all time,' there could be no doubt."

This objection meets us at the threshold, and, if true, opens the pulpit to women. Did Paul impose silence upon women for all time, or only for his own time? That he laid the prohibition upon the Corinthian church only, and that for special reasons, while other churches were free from it, is excluded by the correct punctuation of the passage. Scholars are agreed that it should read: "As in all churches of the saints, let your women keep silence in the churches." This

renders the prohibition universal, so far as the times of the apostles are concerned, and, at the same stroke, sets aside entirely much that is said and written about the temporary nature of these commands. Disorders in the church at Corinth gave *occasion*, but did not constitute the *reason*, for the command of silence; for (1) the men, so far as the record goes, were as disorderly in their speaking as were the women. (2) While Paul meets the disorders of the men in one way, he meets the disorders of the women in quite another way; telling the men to speak "by two or by three, and by course," but forbidding the women to speak at all in the assemblies. (3) No disorder in the church at Corinth could have been the reason why silence had been practised by women in all other churches of the saints. (4) Paul nowhere refers to these disorders as the reason for his prohibitions. Hence we conclude that these disorders in the Corinthian church were merely the occasion, but not the reason, of the commands of silence.

Looking at these commands as rules of conduct given to all the churches during the apostolic age, the question arises: Have they the marks of temporary or of perpetual rules? were they designed for the primitive ages, or for all time? In answering this question we must have regard, not so much to the occasion which gave rise to the command, as to the reasons assigned for giving it. We hold that these rules of silence are universal and perpetual: (1) They contain no limitation of time or territory, expressed or understood. They are universal and perpetual in the terms used to express them. (2) Rules thus given are presumptively universal and perpetual, unless they be founded, expressly or impliedly, on customs, circumstances, etc., which pass away. (3) Though occasioned by disorders in a certain church, these rules are expressly founded in the will of God as revealed in creation, on the prior deception of Eve, and on the law which had itself been founded on the same. The reason of the rules has not, then, ceased; therefore the rules remain in force. (4) The apostle nowhere rests these rules

of silence on temporary grounds, as, in 1 Cor. vii. 26, he rests his advice against marriage on "the present distress." The fact that in the one case he assigns perpetual and universal reasons, while in the other only temporary reasons, is a strong confirmation of the view we have taken. (5) The position of woman under the old dispensations, the fact that neither Christ nor his apostles chose a woman to teach or to preach, the interpretation put upon these rules by the teachings and practice of all divisions of the church down to the present hour with few exceptions during the first and the last century, confirm the perpetuity and universality of the commands of silence. (6) To treat these rules of silence as temporary, is, in our opinion, to invalidate every precept and command of the Bible. For, for what others are more universal and permanent reasons given? (7) The insertion of the little clause, "for all time," would be so foreign to the style of the sacred writers, as to become an element of weakness instead of strength. Critics would regard it as an interpolation. For these reasons we hold the objection to be invalid, and that the injunction of silence is of perpetual obligation. Surely so long as the reasons of a law remain the law exists in force, unless it be expressly repealed.

It may be replied that the principle is still in force, though the form of exhibiting it be changed; that women are to be modest, in obedience, usurping no authority over the men, even now while speaking in the assemblies. If Paul meant no more than this, why did he say more? He told the men to speak in "course"; why did he not tell the women to speak in modesty? Was speaking then "in all churches of the saints" a sign of equality unbecoming the position of women? So Paul regarded it; and so he forbade it. It was not the manner, but the thing itself, that he condemned; and he condemned the speaking itself, because in its very nature, whatever the manner of it may be, speaking in the assembly is inconsistent with the position of women in the churches. Hence all the reasons he gives are reasons against speaking at all in the churches, and not against an offensive

manner of address. We cannot believe that woman's subordination, in the scriptural sense of the term, permits to-day what in Paul's time it absolutely forbade.

It may be said that other general rules are given which are nevertheless modified by circumstances. Though we have the command, "Resist not evil," yet we justify certain forms of resistance, even unto bloodshed and war. This is true; for we have the example of Christ¹ and his apostles² to guide us, as well as the words of Paul: "If it be possible, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men."³ Besides, no one doubts that these general rules are still in full force; and that all violation of their spirit is sin, and all violation of their literal sense is exceptional, and should be rare indeed. We are to obey the precept in spirit, always; in letter, generally.

Admitting that the prohibitions under consideration are still in full force, it is said that they apply to the more public meetings of the church, and not to social prayer-meetings. We think they apply to all the meetings of the church, and to all mixed assemblies of men and women. Our reasons are these: (1) The context. Does the context describe a religious assembly to which the prohibition was applied? If so, then the prohibition applies to all similar meetings; for, unless it be applied to the *kind* of meetings described, we have no right to apply it to any meeting whatever. If we can determine the kind of meeting referred to in the context, the extent of the prohibition is found. In 1 Cor. xiv. 26-38, a Christian assembly is described, from which we learn: (a) That men and women and probably unbelievers were present. (b) That the control of the meeting seemed to be in the hands of the membership, and not in the hands of a pastor, no elder or bishop being mentioned. (c) That many, even all males, might take an active part in carrying on the meeting. (d) That women only were forbidden to speak, or prophesy, or teach in it. The meeting here described has no likeness

¹ Matt. xxvi. 51-54; John xviii. 23.

² Acts xvi. 37; xxiii. 3.

³ Rom. xii. 18.

of manner to our church services on the Lord's day, but is, instead, an exact representation of a modern prayer and conference meeting, save that miraculous gifts have ceased, and that our social meetings are more formal than the one here described. It was to such informal, social meetings that Paul referred when he said, "It is a shame for women to speak"; and we contend that it is to such-like meetings that the command of silence now applies.

(2) The circumstances of the early churches. They had no church edifices. They met where they could; in private houses, as well as in more public places. Some of these churches must have been very small. Their meetings resembled our social meetings in private houses in size as in the order of worship. Now these small churches, meeting in private houses, and frequently without a pastor, observed the rule of silence enjoined upon women in their assemblies, as fully as did the larger churches meeting in more public places; for Paul referring to them, says to the Corinthians: "as in all churches of the saints, let your women keep silence in the churches."

(3) The difficulty of applying the rules of silence to any kind of meetings, if not applied to the kind described. If women may now speak in meetings similar in all respects, save the absence of supernatural gifts, to those in which they were once commanded to keep silence, who can prevent their preaching? If, by our interpretation, we open to the voice of women meetings exactly similar to those respecting which Paul enjoined silence upon them, how can we close to them meetings unlike those described? It will be found impossible to apply the prohibition anywhere, unless we begin, where the apostle did, with informal, social meetings. We must apply the command to the kind of meetings, i.e. every sort of church service where both men and women are present, respecting which the prohibition was originally given, or to none at all. Women permitted to speak in social meetings will ask for the pulpit; and on what ground can they be denied?

(4) The principle on which Paul rests his prohibitions, that of subordination of woman to man (see 1 Cor. xi. 3, 7; xiv. 34; 1 Tim. ii. 12-14), applies equally to all meetings where men are present, — as really to social prayer-meetings as to the preaching service. These are our reasons for believing that the command of silence now in full force, is laid upon women in all Christian assemblies composed of males and females. If appeal be taken from them to common sense, we abide the issue. We have no fear of any reversal of what God has engraven in the constitution of the sexes, and written in his word. The decision may be slow in coming, but its utterance when given will be the repetition of Paul's command of silence.

With all earnestness and solemnity we, in the name of the truth, demand of those who, in teaching or in practice, or in both, set at naught Paul's commands of silence, the grounds of their action. Show, by fair and full exegesis, why women should now speak in the assemblies of the saints. If the truth be against us, let it be shown, and we will obey it.

To this demand some will respond by quoting certain passages of scripture which they imagine conflict with the view presented; while others will appeal to the good which women do by speaking in the public meetings. On this point, is God's word divided? or, is his providence in conflict with his word? Let the facts answer.

Certain prophetesses under the old dispensation are frequently referred to, as justifying women's speaking in the churches at the present time; but wrongly; for (1) no instance of their public speaking is recorded. Miriam gave inspired responses to the song of Moses;¹ afterwards privately speaking against her brother, she was smitten with leprosy.² Deborah judged Israel oppressed by Jabin king of Canaan; called Barak, and, in the name of the Lord, ordered him to collect an army; accompanied him, but not as commander, to the battle; told him, as a prophetess, when to join battle with Sisera; composed and sung a song of triumph.³

¹ Ex. xv. 20, 21.² Num. xii.³ Judges iv, v.

Huldah is briefly mentioned as being privately consulted by the messengers of Josiah, and as foretelling the postponement of the threatened evils, until after the death of that good king.¹ Noadiah was a false prophetess.² Anna, coming into the Temple saw the infant Jesus, whom his mother had brought to Jerusalem "to present to the Lord," and she "gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."³ As there were no assemblages in the Temple on such occasions, and as only Simeon and Anna of all who "looked for redemption in Jerusalem" are mentioned as being present, the speaking of this holy woman could have been only in private. We can find no instance in the Bible of a woman's speaking in public. (2) If these prophetesses had each been called to public speaking, they would have been exceptions to the general rule, in striking contrast with the conduct of all other women under the law. Certainly no rule could have been or can now be founded upon these exceptional cases. (3) Yea, more; if under the law all women had been commanded to speak in public, as all males were commanded to be circumcised, the command under the old dispensation would have been reversed by the prohibitions under the gospel, as was actually the case with the ceremonial law and the rite of circumcision. Nothing certainly can be made of these cases against the position we have taken.

In turning to the dispensation of the gospel, we find certain women mentioned as helping the apostle much in the Lord; but in no instance are they represented as preaching, or speaking in any assembly of the saints. It is, indeed, an unconscious, and therefore a more humiliating, satire upon our times, that it should be assumed so generally that in those days women could not have been helpers at all without speaking in meeting. Have we come to this, that in the minds of so many the whole of Christian labor is public talk?

Joel predicts⁴ and Peter quotes⁵ that "in the last days"

¹ 2 Kings xxii. 14-20.

² Neh. vi. 14

³ Luke ii. 36-38.

⁴ Joel ii. 28-32.

⁵ Acts ii. 17-21.

God's Spirit should lead "daughters" and hand-maidens," as well as men, to "prophecy"; but neither prophet nor apostle specifies any particular place, as the church, in which it should be done. Now Paul nowhere forbids women to prophesy, except "in the churches." They could have exercised their gift in private, or in a congregation of women, as did the four virgin daughters of Philip. In saying this we do not speak lightly; for, at a time when women were so secluded that the churches appointed deaconesses for the well ordering of their affairs, there was a special need of the supernatural gift of prophecy among women and for women. A prophetess would have had enough to do among her own sex, without speaking in the assemblies. Besides, prophesying was not an ordinary, but a supernatural exercise; and could, if it had not then been forbidden to women in all churches, furnish no rule for our times. The proof is this: (1) The *usus loquendi* of the words "prophet" and "prophecy."¹ (2) The close union of "prophecy" in the passage with supernatural "visions," "dreams," and physical events. Surely the ordinary visions of young men, and the ordinary dreams of old men, neither arise from the outpouring of God's Spirit, nor add glory to the dispensation of grace. (3) Peter quotes the passage, to explain a supernatural event. This passage has, therefore, no possible application to ordinary, uninspired speaking. None could then, or can now, prophesy, but the inspired of the Holy Ghost. Though these supernatural events were to take place "in the last days" i.e. in the times of the gospel, there is no intimation that they were to continue throughout the new dispensation. Paul even expressly pronounces supernatural gifts, including prophecy, to be temporary in their exercise;² while he forbade women to prophesy in the churches.³ If they could not exercise a supernatural gift, much less could they their ordinary powers of speech in the assemblies. No one can find in this passage the least authority for the modern practice of women's speaking in public.

¹ See pp. 343-346.² 1 Cor. xiii. 8.³ See pp. 343-347.

“There is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 28), is often used against us. Now it is fair, in explaining it, to ask, what was Paul speaking about? In view of what did he say, “There is no male and female”?¹ We learn from the context. He reasons, in vs. 1-5 of the same chapter, with the Galatians upon their apostasy from faith in Christ to reliance on the deeds of the law for salvation. Then he shows that “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness” (vs. 6-9), and “that God would justify the heathen through faith,” as he declared unto Abraham. Next he proves that there is no salvation for any one by the law; for the law itself says: “The just shall live *by faith*” (vs. 10-14). But salvation is by the covenant of promise made to Abraham, which is by faith, and which the law coming afterwards could not annul (vs. 15-18). The use of the law was not then, to introduce another way of salvation, namely, by works; but to lead to Christ, as slaves used to bring the children of their masters to school, that by faith in Christ, men might be saved (vs. 19-26). For the baptized into Christ have put on Christ (v. 27), i.e. they have by faith clothed themselves in the likeness of Christ, and not in the rags of good works. We are made Abraham’s seed, and heirs “according to promise” (v. 29), i.e. heirs according to the covenant of promise which is by faith. Thus the thought of the apostle, both preceding and following v. 28, is salvation by faith, and not by the law. This is his argument with the Galatians. In view of this salvation by faith, he says: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male and female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” There is not one way of salvation for one, and another for another. Salvation by faith is the only way, and the same way for all mankind. There is a significant change of construction in this verse, which the common translation gives no intimation of, but which we have brought out in our quotation of it. On this change Ellicott rests the following comment, namely,

¹ See Greek Text.

“ While the alterable, political, and sociable distinctions are contrasted by *οὐδέ*, the unalterable human one of sex is expressed by *καί*.” Paul, as if having his eye on the discussion of our day, by a slight change of construction guards the foundation, “ the unalterable human distinction of sex,” on which he rests the difference he in other places makes between men and women in the public worship of God. The meaning of this passage is, then, that salvation by faith is the same to all mankind, whatever be their race, condition, or sex, though *natural distinctions still exist in full force*. Now this essential unity in the way of salvation is not in the least inconsistent with different modes of worship or privileges and proprieties in worship. The Temple service was unlike the worship of a Christian assembly in form and in the privilege of participating in it; yet salvation under the law as under the gospel was by faith. So, in the Christian assembly, privileges may be accorded to some and denied to others, while all, if saved, must be saved by faith. Unless salvation by faith and speaking in the churches are identically the same thing, then the passage, “ There is no male and female; for all ye are one in Christ Jesus,” can never be quoted against the silence of women in the churches.

Were it even doubtful what Paul referred to in Gal. iii. 28, that doubt could not be used against us. For, to make a doubtful passage, one that admits of another meaning, an argument against rules stated in the most explicit manner, positively, negatively, and repeatedly — rules which are discussed and reasons assigned for giving — is too desperate even for a forlorn hope. But there can be no doubt whatever that Paul speaks in it of salvation by faith for all mankind, and of that alone.

It would seem that we have said enough already about 1 Cor. xi. 5;¹ but we are forced to return to it again. According to what law of interpretation or of common sense, can the bare allusion to a practice or statement of a fact be made to reverse a full and repeated prohibition of the prac-

¹ See p. 353.

lice or denial of the fact? In opening an unknown volume we find a passage referring to a certain rebellion, and condemning the barbarities practised in it. A few pages further on we come upon an emphatic and repeated condemnation of the rebellion itself in principle and in practice. Who in his senses, we ask, would ever dare to offset the latter condemnation by the former reference? Who would say that the writer favored the rebellion because he at first alludes to it in order to condemn the cruelties accompanying it, and then denounces the rebellion itself as wrong? Alas! it is left for professed students of the Bible to do with it what no one would dare to do with any other book.

In the context (v. 3) Paul announces the underlying principle of the whole discussion in the words: *Θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι, ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός.* He starts out with the profound statement that "subordination pervades the whole universe, and especially the Christian system." In this way he met the women in the Corinthian church who "claimed equality with the men." The head of the woman is the man, as the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God. This fundamental principle he introduces with the strong words: "I would have you know," as though they had forgotten it, or were ignorant of it. Not on equality is the kingdom of God built, as was then and is now claimed by some, but on subordination; on which relation Paul proceeds to discuss certain improprieties of dress and conduct on the part of women.

Again he adds (v. 7): "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head" (i.e. wear the sign of subjection), "forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man;" hence the woman should cover her head. Such was then the law, and to-day in all our assemblies the women worship with covered heads, the men with uncovered. The custom has continued, because the law on which it is founded is permanent.

The Corinthian women, "claiming equality with the men,"

neglected the dress proper for their position, and were ready in this, as in other things, to defend their course. Paul meets such with his authority as an apostle. "But if any one thinks to be contentious in defence of such a custom, let him know that it is disallowed by me, and by all the churches of God."¹ Had he not his eye on the "contentious" also of the present day?

"Was not the priority of man, as founded on creation and Eve's deception, done away just so far as redemption has given us the perfect ideal of humanity"? Paul wrote under the gospel and not under the law; if, then, this priority had been done away in redemption, how could he have appealed to it in laying down rules for Christian churches? That it was not so done away is impliedly affirmed in his appeal to it.

As a final attack upon the position we maintain, on scriptural grounds, it is affirmed that the passages enjoining silence upon women in the churches are doubtful, equivocal. Should a critical and honest examination of them end in throwing doubt upon their meaning or upon their present binding force, then the churches would be *so far forth* free from any express law in the matter.

But, unfortunately for this assumption, these passages are genuine, explicit, unambiguous, uncontradicted by others, and have received from commentators, excepting always Dr. Clarke, early and late, the most recent as distinctly as the remote, the same interpretation. If these passages must be declared "doubtful, equivocal," there is not a verse in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, that may not with equal authority be declared doubtful, equivocal; while those doctrinal texts on which evangelical Christianity is built and defended are, on the same principles, and for the same reasons, far more doubtful and equivocal. Our rock is nothing but quicksand; for on what other point can such unanimity among commentators and Bible students be found? Will any dare cry, "It is doubtful, it is doubtful," in order to defend a practice condemned by it? God forbid.

¹ Verse 16, Conybeare and Howson.

In taking up another class of objections, we enter our solemn protest against submitting the revealed will of God respecting anything, to the test of experiment. We cannot do it without subverting his authority. This touches the essence of obedience. Shall we obey because God wills it, or because by experiment we have found it profitable to obey? Undoubtedly the words, as the works, of God will by the experiment be shown to be divine. In things unrevealed a sufficient experiment is necessary; and the results of obedience in things revealed become confirmations of God's authority; but to subject things revealed to the test of experiment implies unbelief and sin: it dethrones God.

As, however, there has been a short and limited experiment, to the results of which appeal is confidently made, we cannot be silent. The following principles underlie the whole discussion of results, namely: (1) That God does not contradict in providence what he has revealed in his word. (2) That no experiment can be conclusive until time has developed all the influences and results by which it is to be judged. (3) That an act may be subjectively benevolent which is objectively wrong, as the giving of poison for medicine by a loving mother; and *vice versa*. (4) That God in bestowing blessings regards the subjective state more than the objective act.

It is urged, as conclusive, that God's blessing does, in many instances, accompany the speaking of women in the assemblies. This we thankfully admit; for probably no woman has wilfully transgressed in the matter. The fault has been one of ignorance, not of intent; of interpretation, or rather a practice indulged in without knowledge or reproof, and not of the heart. Probably no one of them would have spoken, had she believed that Paul forbade her to do so. They probably read Paul's prohibitions as a good Methodist once told us that she read those passages which teach election and divine decrees: "I hurry over them as fast as I can"; not because she would trifle with God's message of love, but because these passages seemed to teach what was to her the gravest

error, Calvinism. Now, such being the attitude towards both God's decrees and his commands of silence, and the silence of women not lying at the foundation of the gospel plan, it is in accordance with God's providence to reward their earnest piety. His blessing is, however, to be ascribed to their piety, and not to their external violation of his commands. He, in other words, overlooks their departure from his strict injunctions in order to reward their devotion; and does not overlook their devotion in order to bless their public address. When once it is clearly accepted, however, that Paul's rules are now binding, any violation of them will involve the authority of God, and cannot receive his blessing, unless he encourage wilful disobedience.

Why not, then, let the churches rest in this ignorance, it may be asked. Because history shows us that just in the same way all the abominations of the Papacy grew up. It seemed desirable to the primitive churches, owing to the ignorance of the country clergy, to give the precedence in their common affairs to metropolitan bishops. That little disregard of Christ's express teachings respecting the parity of believers ended in the Papacy, and in the logical dogma of Papal infallibility. What worked so well for a time, wrought the downfall of pure religion, and filled the world with the blood of martyrs and the enslaving of the souls of men. Shall now the reformed churches begin a similar career? Shall we allow departures from God's word to grow into common practices? Shall we remain silent until they become popular, then seek to justify them? This we cannot do, either with honor to ourselves, or fealty to God, or safety to the church. The women's rights movement, which has already filled the thoughtful patriot and the Christian with so much solicitude, has the fountain of its strength right here. But the end is not yet. The principles of interpretation employed to lift the commands of silence from women in Christian assemblies lead logically and inevitably to heresy of every sort. The whole plan of salvation so attached must go down before them. The way in which the soundest laws

of interpretation are set aside, the merest allusion made of greater weight than positive prohibitions, is cause of anxiety for the future, lest the authority of every revealed truth be overthrown by the church itself.

“Do you not by your interpretation of Paul make the text of scripture, written eighteen hundred years ago, contradict the voice of Providence and of the Spirit, as unequivocally expressed in the history of his church?” The women were silent in the primitive churches, except for a time at Corinth; they have been silent in the Roman Catholic and Greek churches, in the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Congregational churches, with here and there an exception, down to the present time. The departure from this practice is of recent date, and it came up first among the Quakers, then among the Methodists; the Baptists and some congregations in other denominations have fallen into it. The success that has attended some of these denominations can be adequately explained on other grounds. Indeed, Stevens, the historian of Methodism, in giving the causes of the progress of the Methodist movement, makes no mention of this as one.

Where, then, is “the voice of Providence and of the Spirit unequivocally expressed in the history of the church”? We should be glad to have that “voice” interpreted to us. We have not heard it. If it be meant, as we suspect it is, that the success of Methodism is that “voice” which proves that Paul’s words are obsolete respecting the silence of women in the churches; then why does not the success of the Papacy prove that Christ’s words, “But call ye no one your father upon the earth,” “for all ye are brethren,” are obsolete, and the true equality of believers in the kingdom of God, a contradiction? Why does not the success of Mohammedanism destroy the Trinity, the atonement of Christ Jesus, and prove the superiority of Mahomet to the Son of God? And why does not the pre-eminent success of Paganism prove that there are in reality “lords many and gods many”? Is God’s word inspired? is it the supreme law of the churches? or is it to be amended, set aside, or maintained, just as the siren voice of success demands?

“To the law and to the testimony.” Success cannot nullify God’s holy word. If it can, give us an infallible Pope, or rather, let us return to idolatry again; for its devotees outnumber threefold all Christian nations. The partial experiment, during one short century, of setting at defiance the express utterances of God respecting what may be, indeed, a minor matter, is not sufficient to prove that it can safely be done; and the arrogance of such a claim shows the danger of granting it. The Papacy can present a stronger.

“The truth is, that all those churches here in New England, characterized by the greatest amount of revival power are those in every case, so far as my acquaintance extends, which encourage the women to participate in the exercises of their religious meetings.” Now, if there had been no revivals in the times of the apostles, or during the Reformation, or under the preaching of Edwards, Tennant, and other ministers of more recent times, in all which women were silent in the churches, then we might conclude that the “revival power” of the churches, to which reference is made, was derived from the speaking of women in their meetings; but, as it is, it is more natural to believe that the revival opened the mouths of the women; and that had the women remained silent the revival power would not have been much less. The fact that these revivals have been accompanied with what we hold to be the violation of Paul’s injunctions, and that this violation has been encouraged by pastors under wrong conceptions of Paul’s teachings, cannot be received as conclusive against, or as impinging upon, the received interpretation of these teachings; for strong physical demonstrations have also accompanied, not cold churches, but revivals, and have been encouraged, and yet they have not promoted the salvation of souls or the growth of believers in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, but contrariwise.¹

¹ Rev. H. B. Blake, writing from Dudley, N. C., May 23, 1870, says of the colored churches in that vicinity: “They imagine that the wild excitement which leads them to dance, shout, wail, and go into convulsions, and which is unquestionably demoralizing and licentious in its tendencies, comes of the Spirit

But we need not take a position so readily assailed, if not assailable; for, on the principle already announced, we may safely admit that God has blessed the prayers and remarks of these pious women, overlooking their improper conduct, because done in ignorance and under the encouragement of pastors.

It is said that our argument overleaps itself, that it would stop all singing of women in church and all their teaching in the Sabbath-school. This is a great mistake. Sabbath-schools are not the *kind* of meetings described or referred to. They are not meetings of the churches at all, but schools under the management of the churches for the children. Surely a command can apply to an assembly of worshipping believers that does not to a school of Bible instruction. All languages probably have words for singing and totally distinct words for speaking. At any rate the Greek has. And yet Paul does not employ one of them in his prohibitions. The word "silence" does not cover singing, for it was used with express reference to speaking. Who can show that it includes and covers what Paul was not speaking of at all? If we appeal to logic, let us be governed by it.

Let it be understood that these commands of silence are general rules for fully constituted churches. They admit of exceptions in the case of weak churches composed almost entirely of women, and of female teachers of the ignorant negro and heathen. It is not only permitted to women, but it becomes their duty, to do in such cases what it would be improper for them to do in well constituted churches. When men fail, or are incompetent, let the women build the walls of Zion, let them proclaim the riches of redeeming love. These rules of propriety give place to a higher law in such exigencies; but in the churches fully constituted, the command of silence is in force.

of God,"—Am. Missionary, July 1870, p. 146. We cannot, therefore, logically argue that whatever accompanies a revival, is approved of God; the point now considered. In a revival, Christians will generally do what they think ought to be done, however mistaken in judgment they may be.

This modern movement to subvert the scriptural relation of the sexes has not yet produced its legitimate fruits. The attempt of the Corinthian women to assert their equality with men, in the conduct of worship, was met by the prohibitions which we have shown apply equally well to our day. It is still true that "the head of the woman is the man," as "the head of every man is Christ." But what excitement, if not animosity, would be produced in many of our churches, by the reading and sound exposition of these rules of conduct for Christian assemblies, which Paul founds upon this subordination? Is that condition of our churches a safe one, in which rules of conduct in Christian assemblies cannot be publicly read and fairly expounded? Yet, if we may judge from a recent trial in an assembly of clergymen and laymen, just this is the condition at present of many churches which profess to receive the scriptures as their only sufficient and perfect rule of faith and practice. Surely this is to be deplored.

Again, the way in which Paul is spoken of by most men and women who "disagree with him on this subject," to use the words of one of them, strikes at the citadel of inspiration, and destroys all regard for the authority of the Bible. These are some of the evil fruits which, already blushing into ripeness, will be largely gathered by the rising generation. But the most poisonous fruit hangs on the attempt to do with the Bible respecting the silence of women what every errorist tries to do with it respecting truths obnoxious to him, and infidels respecting the whole. We submit it to the enlightened judgment of the churches that thus far in the experiment these evils and others which might be mentioned are not compensated by the advantages. Indeed this is a matter of interpretation and of obedience, not of hoped-for benefits. The mother who sets Paul aside on this subject, cannot blame her son for doing the same thing, on the same principles of exegesis, with Christ and the apostles; for she has taught him how to do it. Though her logical powers may not carry her quite to this length,

his will carry him ; and, what is more, if she be right in discarding a part, he is right in rejecting the whole. In view of this certain result of the rules of interpretation employed to rid the Bible of these restraints, we solemnly call upon ministers and churches to beware what they do. We may easily open the dikes of Holland with our hands, but who can turn the devouring sea back again when once it enters ?

A modern apostle of infidelity used to say, that in half a century Christianity would be extinct ; so the prediction is ventured that in fifty years no one will hold the Pauline view of the silence of women in the churches. The Frenchman was mistaken ; for religion lies deeper than infidelity : and so will this later prophet be ; for Paul's teaching here rests securely on a law which pervades the whole universe, and especially the Christian system. Law is stronger than theory, and will bring this whole movement to naught. We have no fear ; God's laws will prevail, and his word will be vindicated, whoever opposes ; for the principle on which Paul discusses the question and founds his rules, is thus stated by him : " I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ ; and the head of the woman is the man ; and the head of Christ is God."

In conclusion we would say, that it is not pleasant to seek to stem the tide of popular opinion. But loyalty to God's word is more than favor. When infidelity threatens the churches, we cannot afford to forge for it the weapons by which our destruction is to be wrought. Allegiance to God, to his word, to sound principles of interpretation, is what is now demanded. In this allegiance we stand. In this allegiance the church shall triumph ; out of it, disaster awaits the church.

In all the works of God " it is the glory of each part to keep the place assigned to it." The scripture, in harmony with the law of her creation, assigns a high place to woman ; and her glory lies in keeping it. To make the homes of the people divine in their influence, to take the plastic infant

from the hand of God and with loving fingers fashion its character, and perchance fix its destiny, before a father's or a pastor's influence can reach it, is a part of her privilege and glory. To do thousands of other potent things, the doing of which has made the Christian woman of all ages so radiant with celestial light and their memories so sweetly fragrant, is hers to-day. There is room enough for woman to attain the height of Christian perfectness, without seeking again a fruit which has been forbidden her. It was not to oppress her that Paul wrote as he did; but, being inspired by the Spirit to know the mind of God, he graciously hedged her allotted sphere round about with certain limitations, lest her glory should be sullied and her influence weakened. He impugns the wisdom of God and does woman a great wrong who seeks to lift the restraints imposed upon her in creation, that he may give her a larger sphere. If she heed him, her Eden will again be lost.

ARTICLE IX.

THE DIACONATE AN OFFICE.

BY REV. S. L. BLAKE, CONCORD, N. H.

WHATEVER it is, the diaconate should not be merely a name. It has been justly regarded with a certain degree of respect, if not reverence, and still deserves to be, because of its origin, the duties belonging to it, and the men who have *served* God and his church in it. It seems to us that there are cogent reasons why the diaconate should be considered an office, and that it was so considered by the apostolic and primitive churches. We propose to present a few:

1. The first reason which we shall notice is, that it seems probable that an organization of such importance as a Christian church would have *officers*. The Jewish church certainly did have officers whose distinctive business was to manage its temporal and its spiritual affairs. These were