

“MAY WOMEN SPEAK IN MEETING?” by J. N. Andrews

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There are two principal passages cited to, prove that women should not take any part in speaking in religious meetings. These are 1 Cor, 14:34-36, and 1 Tim. 2:12. But a careful study of the books of Corinthians shows that the passage first referred to can have no such application. The Corinthian church was in a state of great disorder. The first chapter shows that they were divided into parties in reference to the apostles themselves. The fifth chapter shows, that one had taken his father's wife, and thee others did not mourn over this act. The sixth, chapter shows that they went to law with the world, and implies that they were guilty of violating the seventh commandment. The eleventh chapter shows that when they celebrated the Lord's supper, the rich ate and drank until they were intoxicated, and the poor were waiting, and suffering hunger.

Now it appears front the fourteenth chapter that when they were assembled in meeting, the women threw everything into confusion by talking among themselves, and acting with such indecorum as to be a matter of shame to them. So that what the apostle says to women in such a church as this, and in such a state of things is not to be taken as directions to all Christian women in other churches and in other times, when and where such disorders do not exist.

As positive proof that he was not speaking against a woman's participating in religious worship, we refer to 1 Cor. 11:5, where he says that every woman who prophesieth or prayeth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head. And in chapter fourteen, verse three, he says, that he that prophesieth speaketh unto men, to edification, exhortation, and comfort. These two passages show that they (women) did speak to edification, exhortation, and comfort. It was not a shame for women to do this work. Therefore Paul did not refer to such acts when he said, "It is a shame for women to speak in the church." 1 Tim. 2:12. We understand this text to give Paul's general rule with regard to women, as public teachers. But there are some exceptions to this general rule to be drawn even from Paul's writings, and from other scriptures. It appears from Phil. 4:3 that women labored with him in the gospel. Romans 16:1 shows that Phebe was a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea. See original.

Verse 3 shows that Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, was one of Paul's helpers; and Acts 18:26 shows that she was capable of instructing Apollos. Tryphena and Tryphosa, Rom. 16:12, labored in the Lord; and Persis labored much in the Lord. Acts 21:8, 9. Philip's four daughters prophesied. In Luke 2, Anna the prophetess is mentioned. Verses 36-38. In the time of Jeremiah, Huldah was a prophetess consulted, instead of Jeremiah himself. See 2 Chron. 34. In the fifth of Judges, Deborah is spoken of, and in the fifteenth of Exodus, Miriam. Paul, in Romans 10:10, says, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" and this must apply to women equally with men. —J. N. ANDREWS