

1-1-1938

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Recommended Citation

Mueller, J. T. (1938) "St. Paul and Woman's Status," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 9 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol9/iss1/2>

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say: Behold, behold, there goes that fine animal that can write such precious books and preach so unusually well. Then you will be blissful and more than blissful in heaven,—yea, in that which is prepared for the devil and his angels. To summarize: Let us seek honor and be as proud as we may. In this book the honor is God's alone, and it is written: *Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam. Cui est gloria in secula seculorum. Amen.*"
 (St. Louis Ed., XIV, 434 ff.) P. E. KRETZMANN

St. Paul and Woman's Status *

Under this heading, in the *Woman's Press* (August, 1937), Hazel E. Foster, administrative dean, Presbyterian College of Education, Chicago, has published an article on the subject of Paul's prohibitions in 1 Cor. 11, 3 ff.; 14, 33 ff. (1 Tim. 2, 11 ff.) relating to the veiling and public speaking of women in church assemblies, which, in adaptation, is offered for further theological study in the *Religious Digest* (October, 1937).

Evidently the article has been read with much interest and at least some approval in wide areas, for no sooner had it appeared than the question was submitted to us whether or not it may be accepted also in our circles as essentially correct and Biblical. The problem, we think, deserves attention, since the question of the veiling and public speaking of women in church assemblies is still causing some pastors considerable vexation of spirit, though perhaps more than enough has been written on the topic in our church periodicals, commentaries, and other publications. As long as the earth will stand, coals, it seems, must be carried to Newcastle and theological discussions repeated in order that truth may have her way and prevail. It is in the spirit of willing, timely service of larger questioning groups that the following notes on the matter are offered here.

1

First of all, we readily admit that in Miss Foster's articles there are statements that are not only correct but also most helpful in supplying a proper background and clearing up difficulties which have their source in the peculiar social and religious situation of the Corinthian church. Touching our particular subject, we gladly draw attention to the excellent description of the general importance of the woman's veil in those early times. Miss Foster says:

* Cp. Vol. I, 351—359, also IV, 85—95, of this magazine.

"Jewish ladies covered every hair. They had a superstition that, if a single one escaped there was danger that a demon might come and sit upon it. Their head-covering was a badge of modesty. A mother was asked why God had blessed her by making two of her sons high priests. She answered that her ceiling never saw her hair. A Rabbi fined a man the full price of a dowry for undoing the queer head-piece that held a Jewish matron's locks. To appear in Temple or synagog 'uncovered' was unthinkable."

"The missionary understood the field in which he was working. His converts were nearly all Gentiles, and they had to go on living among heathen neighbors. He knew the foul repute of unveiled females in Corinth. They were either slaves, therefore helpless prey, or prostitutes, or both. Athenian wives, we know, had to muffle up almost to suffocation. If they failed to do so, outside their apartments, they were subject to divorce and forbidden to remarry. It was taken for granted that they had meant to lure men.

"The younger Pliny, Paul's near contemporary, was very proud of the enthusiasm his girl wife, Calpurnia, showed when he read his poems to an applauding crowd, but he makes it plain that she always kept in hiding behind a curtain. Certainly, the safety of Corinthian church women and the good name of the church itself depended on their conformity to this custom of veiling. This is true in the Near East today. I remember Jane Addams's saying to me, 'I didn't wonder why Paul had them veil after I visited Egypt.' I found Christian women covering closely on their way to the Luxor mission-church, while Mohammedan women were most strict in veiling. Bare faces for women in the Near East are far more shocking to many than bare feet would be in the West."

"It is interesting to run through writings of intellectuals in and near Paul's time to catch *their* thoughts about women. Except for certain Stoics the opinion ran pretty low. Pliny was popular with superior women, true, and generous toward them; yet he could not believe that his friend's wife could have written the classic letter her husband claimed for her. He concluded that, if she did, her husband must have taught her; so the credit was still his.

"Plutarch was a chivalrous gentleman and a noble husband. He and his wife belonged to the same philosophical coterie and the same mystery cult. They collaborated in the education of their sons. But he wrote to a young bride friend that a woman ought to speak only to her husband and through him and that female speech suggested immodesty. Incidentally he explained that, where 'two hearts beat as one,' a single pocketbook is best and that it is fitting he should carry it even if she contributed it. Horace, Martial, Lucretius, are among classic writers who might be quoted to similar purpose, while Juvenal devotes an entire satire to biting censure of the whole sex, most virulently against those who like to express opinions."

Miss Foster concludes her apology of Paul's attitude toward women as follows:

"So, after all, if one must hate St. Paul because of his letter to Corinth, one must hate also all the ancient world. In compari-

son with the men about him, Jews, Romans, Greeks, he was a bold pioneer, a veritable radical, in advancing feminine life socially and religiously far beyond his period."

We quote these paragraphs because they present valuable material for understanding Paul's instructions regarding the veiling and public speaking of women in church assemblies. We admit that the excerpts ought to convince and put to silence many superficial critics of the apostle who condemn him without having thoroughly studied all circumstances that moved him to write as he did, and that not of his own accord, but by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But just the latter fact Miss Foster also either forgets or else refuses to acknowledge because perhaps she does not believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible. For this reason we cannot accept her entire presentation of the matter as sound and reliable, but must offer serious objections to many of her views and verdicts.

2

While Miss Foster, to some extent at least, defends Paul, she throughout her argumentation refuses to give him that credit which he deserves as an inspired apostle of Jesus Christ, whose word is authoritative in the Church. She for instance, declares that Paul forbade the unveiling of women "because he was a Jew." Now, it is indeed true that Paul in doing his great apostolic work took into consideration Jewish customs and prejudices; he himself declares: "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews," 1 Cor. 9, 20. But to contend that his injunction against unveiling was actuated by racial or national prejudices means to deny the apostolic character of his epistles. Let it be understood that it was not Paul the *man* or the *Jew* who wrote First Corinthians but "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God," 1 Cor. 1, 1. This solemn exordium of the epistle not only identifies Paul as an apostle of Jesus Christ, who had a right to compose authoritative letters; but it also shows that the entire epistle belongs to that peculiar category of sacred writings which in their entirety make up the Holy Bible, the only source, rule, and standard of Christian faith and life. If Paul wrote First Corinthians as a called apostle of Jesus Christ, then this letter is an integral part of the "foundation of the apostles and prophets" upon which believers are built (Eph. 2, 20), that is to say, which is God's inspired Word given by His appointed apostles and prophets. This fact we must not forget whenever we examine the passages in question. Here (as elsewhere in his letters) not Paul, but the Holy Spirit speaks to us. Here not a man, but God Himself gives us most necessary directions. Here, if we criticize Paul, we criticize God Himself and thus commit the offense of lese-majesty. This important truth has been frequently

forgotten not only in rationalistic sectarian circles, but of late even in Lutheran quarters. No matter, how anything in Scripture may strike our conceited and rebellious reason, we must bear in mind that God in the Holy Bible is revealing to us His own divine Word, which is to the called the "power of God and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. 1, 24, even if it is to those who are in the process of perishing sheer absurdity (v. 23).

Miss Foster, moreover, is wrong in claiming that the apostle did not forbid public preaching by women. She writes: "The apostle did not tell these women they must not preach. Prophesying was the most important kind of preaching. But he did insist that they must not remove their veils to do it." This statement does not do justice to the text, for while Paul in 1 Cor. 11 treats only of the veiling of the women in church assemblies, he very definitely and categorically forbids preaching by women in 1 Cor. 14, 33 ff. and 1 Tim. 2, 11 ff. There are two plausible reasons why Paul in 1 Cor. 11 may not have *expressis verbis* forbidden public preaching by women in this connection. The first is that Paul, as a wise master builder (1 Cor. 3, 10), attended to first things first, dealing in chap. 11 merely with the trouble facing him just then. At any rate, he places very strong emphasis on the matter of veiling, stating that "every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven," 1 Cor. 11, 5. Furthermore, this prophesying by women was not the ordinary public preaching and teaching but something that represented a special gift of the Holy Spirit, a charismatic endowment. If by God's special dispensation women in Corinth were at times called upon to foretell future events or in any other way to manifest and declare God's special revelation, Paul, who never permitted the Spirit to be quenched (1 Thess. 5, 19), certainly would not interfere in this case. However, such prophesying was not that common preaching which is very definitely forbidden to women in the passages mentioned before. In those Bible-verses the apostle speaks so clearly that no honest Bible student has any right to say: "The apostle did not tell these women they must not preach. But he did insist that they must not remove their veils to do it." Such exegesis is very manifestly unfair and untextuary.

Lastly also Miss Foster is wrong in reproving the apostles for giving a religious reason "for stopping an annoying breach of etiquette and a risky defiance of convention." Her *ipsissima verba* read: "It may seem a pity that he gave a religious reason for stopping an annoying breach of etiquette and a risky defiance of convention. But he was too rabbinic to resist." One religious reason alluded to is expressed by St. Paul as follows: "For a man

indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man," 1 Cor. 11, 7. In a sense Paul's entire argument is religious, for it moves within the sphere of Christian ethics. However, that is not a pity, but something which is entirely natural and proper. Are not all actions of Christians in the final analysis directed by religious motives? It is only if we entirely separate Christian ethics from the Christian religion that we must leave religion out of consideration where the discussion centers about some ethical behavior problem. The trouble with Miss Foster's interpretation is that she always divorces the man Paul from the apostle St. Paul and makes him speak as an ordinary human teacher and not from divine inspiration. Thus also when, referring to Paul's injunction in Gal. 3, 28, she says of him: "When he wrote to the Galatians, he was doubtless thanking God that he had outgrown these three superiorities (of man over woman). But like his parishioners, this minister could not escape his past at once altogether. He had always heard women, children, and slaves mentioned as one class, above which men towered." Why this exegetical comment, which neither is true nor clarifies the situation as it confronts us at Corinth? Miss Foster should not overlook the very first principle of good Scripture exegesis—the pious submission of one's reason to God's Word as the only norm and guide of all Christian teaching. No, we cannot accept Miss Foster's apology as in every part satisfactory, though the purely historical matters which she adduces in explanation of the Corinthian problem help the reader to understand certain features of the social and religious Corinthian background. She is wrong, for example, in claiming that Paul forbade only the unveiling and not the public preaching by women. She is wrong (partly at least) also in attributing Paul's injunction against unveiling to his Jewish prejudices. She is essentially right of course in ascribing the command against the unveiling of women also to the offense which it caused in the ancient Greek and Jewish world.

3

With that, however, we dare not let the matter rest, for there is still a point in the discussion to be cleared up, a vital point, which Miss Foster in her apology passes by with a *quasi* shrug of the shoulder. Speaking of a very orthodox Christian woman, she writes: "She was certain that, if the Apostle Paul had told his feminine congregation to keep on their veils, no woman in all the centuries thereafter must ever appear in church without one." Well, after all, was not that Christian woman of whom Miss Foster speaks, right? Certainly, we as believing Christians would have to forbid the unveiling of women in church assemblies (*as do the*

Romanists still) if the unveiling of women would lie on the same moral level as their public speaking or preaching. But does it not? What right have we today to forbid public preaching by women when we permit public unveiling by women at church? Are not the Romanists much more consistent than we are on this point? In both cases, as Miss Foster remarks, Paul uses religious arguments to oppose the offensive practise of the Corinthian wrongdoers. What difference is there between the religious arguments of Paul which permit us today to allow the unveiling while we insist upon the "keeping of silence by women in the churches"? Certainly it is and always has been our Lutheran practise that we permitted the unveiling and yet prohibited the public speaking by women. What entitles us to make this distinction?

It is manifestly the right view of the matter in question that Paul forbade the unveiling by women in church assemblies in consideration of the significance of the veil at that time among Jews and Gentiles and the great offense therefore given by those who discarded the covering. Miss Foster fitly calls attention to the fact that "in the synagog women were kept apart in a gallery or the rear of the room. They were permitted very little part in the responses. If mothers and wives did make the long journey to the Temple, they had to keep to the court of the women, on a lower level and farther from the priestly ministries than their husbands and sons." Now, no doubt Christian women were not treated with the same extreme severity as were their Jewish or Gentile sisters, since, very naturally, Paul's ennobling and elevating teachings concerning woman's spiritual status in Gal. 3, 28, as also in 1 Cor. 11, 11 ("Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord"), were soon followed by favorable social reactions. At any rate, we may argue that the Christian women at Corinth must have moved even in church assemblies with considerable freedom since otherwise they would not have gone so far as casting aside the veil altogether. The apostle, it seems, was dealing with an emancipated class of women who listened only to the most urgent arguments, insisting that their religious freedom, their spiritual equality with the man, or their being one with the man in the Lord, entitled them to the same prerogatives which their sons and husbands, at any rate, the Christian men at Corinth, enjoyed. From the warmth and even severity of Paul's arguments it is patent that he was facing a critical situation and that only the most telling proofs of his contentions would strike home. Mere appeals to what was customary or conventional would not have sufficed in this instance, where perhaps also the accused women appealed to religion to justify their arrogated freedom.

Thus the apostle was led to argue his case a) from the headship of the man over the woman, b) from the dishonor attaching to the woman who unveiled herself, c) from her social station as the glory of the man, d) from the immediate nuptial purpose of the woman which prompted God to create her as a helpmeet of the man, e) from the admonitory example of the angels, who in deference to their Maker veil themselves in His presence, f) from the fact that God had endowed her with long hair to serve as a glory to her, and g) from the custom of the churches of God—all either religious or semireligious reasons for “stopping an annoying breach of etiquette and a risky defiance of convention.” And very good and convincing reasons these are; they suffered no contradiction. “If any man seem to be contentious,” says the apostle in conclusion, “we have no such custom, neither the churches of God,” 1 Cor. 11, 16.

However, as we group and analyze these arguments, we discover that, in comparison with those by which Paul prohibited the public preaching of women in church assemblies, they are lacking that cogent absoluteness, or finality, which we find in Paul's other injunctions. In no way does St. Paul here say: “It is *not permitted* unto them to unveil;” or: “They are *commanded* to veil;” or: “as also *saith the Law*;” or: “If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual (in this matter), let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14, 34 ff.); or: “I *suffer not* a woman to unveil, nor to usurp authority over the man,” etc. (1 Tim. 2, 11 ff.). A close comparison of the two sets of “religious reasons” will clearly show that in the one instance the apostle is arguing in favor of recognized convention and Christian propriety, while in the other he is arguing for obedience to an absolute command of God, which must be observed not merely at Corinth, but universally and for all times wherever Christian church assemblies occur. Paul's weighty verdict: “as also *saith the Law*,” decides this issue with absolute finality. When Paul forbade women to preach publicly in church assemblies, he was urging upon the Corinthians and other Christians (cf. 1 Tim. 2, 11 ff.) a command of the *Moral Law*, which is in force till the end of time. This, however, he did not do when he urged the Corinthian women to retain the custom of veiling.

All this must be observed in order that one may have a clear view of this complex and difficult problem. While Paul *absolutely* forbade the public preaching by women, he forbade their unveiling only *relatively*, viz., in view of the offense that was given to the Christian cause by the discarding of the veil. Today the veil no longer plays any decisive role in our Western conventions. It is downright immaterial whether a woman veils or unveils, whether

she comes to church with or without a covering. Neither the veiling nor the unveiling presents her to the Lord, to speak in Paul's own expressions. Under no circumstance is any offense given either within the church or without by the presence or the absence of the veil. For this reason we allow our Christian women the utmost freedom in this matter, while at the same time we forbid them to preach in our church assemblies. But strange to say, our present-day Christian women, or at least the overwhelming majority of Christian women today, prefer to come to church with their heads covered; for of their own accord they follow the apostle's sensible and psychologically sound directions, although admittedly he is here not laying down a law binding for all time.

4

So, then, we cannot agree to Miss Foster's principal presentations and views. Contrary to her opinion, we must hold that Paul did forbid women to preach in church. And contrary to her opinion, we must hold also that, when he insisted upon the use of the veil, he did this not as a prejudiced Jew, whose religious and moral makeup was too "rabbinic" to do anything else, but as the inspired apostle of Jesus Christ, who also in this case acted by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, teaching his Christian converts of Jewish and Greek extraction God's own precious Word and will. If we no longer insist upon the veiling of women in church assemblies, it is because the text itself convinces us that this prohibition of the apostle was meant only for those times when public unveiling meant arousing suspicions both within the Church and without. And the sin of giving offense was indeed a most serious matter to the great, godly apostle, who a few chapters before had written to the Corinthians: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend," 1 Cor. 8, 13. Through the knowledge of the strong Corinthian Christians, that is to say, through their abuse or injudicious misuse of their Christian liberty, not a single weak brother was to perish, since for him Christ had died. (Cf. 1 Cor. 8, 11.) So much was at stake also in this case, and from this viewpoint it is easy enough to understand why the apostle so strongly inveighed against the nuisance and presumption involved in the casting aside of the veil, the symbol of honor, refinement, and chastity of all decent women at Paul's time. And for us today, who also live in a Corinthian environment, while the accidental feature regarding the veil has changed, the principle still holds. And it is an important principle even for us today. Paul himself summed it up most wonderfully in this same epistle to the Corinthians in the stirring words: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatso-

ever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles nor to the Church of God, even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit but the profit of many, that they may be saved," 1 Cor. 10, 31—33. Strong words indeed, written by a holy apostle through whom the Holy Spirit Himself speaks to us!

J. THEODORE MUELLER

Abgötterei unter dem Volk Israel im Alten Testament

„Es ist das Herz ein trogig und verzagt Ding; wer kann es ergründen?“ Diese Frage des Herrn durch den Propheten Jeremias, Kap. 17, 9, kennzeichnet nicht nur die natürliche Anlage und Neigung des menschlichen Herzens, sondern auch die volle Entwicklung dieses Dichtens und Trachtens in den Dingen, die zu seinem Unheil dienen. Und es gibt wohl kein anderes Volk, dessen Geschichte in demselben Maße trotz erfahrener göttlicher Güte und Barmherzigkeit die Neigung zu Aberglauben, Wilterdienst und Götzendienst zeigt wie das Volk Israel im Alten Testament. Auch diese Tatsache sollen wir uns zur Warnung gesagt sein lassen, „auf welche das Ende der Welt kommen ist“, 1 Kor. 10, 11. Sehen wir uns einmal kurz die Geschichte dieser Abgötterei und verwandter Sünden an, und achten wir sodann auf die Hauptgötzen, mit denen sich Israel verunreinigte.

Wollen wir die Geschichte der Abgötterei im Alten Testament in einigen Strichen zeichnen, so beginnen wir am besten mit der Bemerkung Josuas in seiner Abschiedsrede an das Volk Israel, wo er spricht: „Eure Väter wohnten vorzeiten jenseits des Wassers, Tharah, Abrahams und Nahors Vater, und dienten andern Göttern. Da nahm ich euren Vater Abraham jenseit des Wassers und ließ ihn wandern im ganzen Lande Kanaan“, Jos. 24, 2. 3. Also noch bei Lebzeiten Noahs und Sems, im achten Geschlecht, war die Abgötterei so eingerissen, daß Gott eine definitive Scheidung vornahm. *) Abraham hat sich von der Abgötterei seines Großvaters und seines Vaters losgerissen, während der andere Teil der Familie, Nahor mit seinem Sohne Bethuel und seinem Großsohn Laban, am Götzendienst festhielten. Es wird uns berichtet, daß, wo immer Abram (später Abraham) hinkam, er einen Altar baute und von dem Namen des Herrn predigte, Gen. 12, 7. 8; 13, 4. 18; 21, 33. Und von Isaak und Jakob wird uns dasselbe berichtet, Gen. 26, 25; 33, 20; 35, 7.

Und doch berührt es merkwürdig, daß Rahel, die doch mit Lea, wie es scheint, den Gott Jakobs angenommen hatte, Gen. 31, 16, ihres Vaters Gözen stahl, B. 19. 34. Diese Hausgötter (עֲרֻסִים) scheinen die-

*) Nach biblischer Chronologie starb Noah im Jahre 2006 nach der Erschaffung der Welt, Nahor schon im Jahre 1997. Tharah lebte noch 127 Jahre mit Noah zusammen.