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Letters to the Editor

Shall Women Keep Silence?
Kingston, Jan. 12.—(To the Editor): In answer to the invitation of the Saturday Whig for correspondence in vindication of the public ministry of women may I draw the attention of your readers to the following facts:

That the passages supposed to contain the teaching of St. Paul concerning the position of women in the church, if accepted as translated, place women out of harmony with the revealed will of God.

Women sing in public worship when according to these Scriptures they are bidden "to keep silence in the churches." They speak in missionary and social service meetings in the church though it is stated "it is a shame for women to speak in the church." In the recent Week of Prayer meetings they prayed "unveiled," though Paul said: "Every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head." They teach in home and foreign missions and in the Sunday School, though Paul said: "I permit not a woman to teach—but to be in quietness."

Are men only "under grace" while women still remain "under the law" is the Bible out of date for the guidance of the women of today? Has the zeal of Christian women for the service of God outrun their recognition of the authority of the word of God? Did the women under the Jewish age enjoy a greater measure of emancipation than under this dispensation of grace when according to the literal Hebrew translation of Isa. 40:9 it is said—"O woman, that publishest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God," and of Psalm 68:11, "The Lord giveth the word; the women that publish the tidings are a great host." Are some portions of the inflexible word of God utterly at variance with other portions on the subject of the public ministry of Christian women?

Surely there must be some explanation.

To a woman of profound knowledge of God and of His word in the original tongues in which it was written, Dr. Kate Bushnell, is due a most illuminating exposition of the whole subject.

First with reference to 1 Cor. 14: 34; 35, Rev. Ver. "Let the women keep silence, for it is not permitted unto them to speak but let them be in subjection as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything let them ask their own husbands at home for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church."

By minute examination of the original Greek text and reference to authoritative scholars and the historical setting Dr. Bushnell shows clearly that Paul never wrote these words as "a commandment of the Lord," but was quoting what the Judaizers in the Corinthian church were saying in their mischief making in connection with the work of Christian women, as in other ways. Again and again from chapter 5 to the end of chapter 14 it can be seen that he is replying to a letter of questions sent in the Corinthian church in the Greek MSS there were no capital letters, no punctuation, no quotation marks. Sir Wm. Ramsay, the most widely accepted authority on St. Paul, says—"We should be ready to suspect St. Paul is making a quotation from the letter addressed to him when any statement stands in marked contrast with Paul's known views."

The "marked contrast" is obvious when the prohibitory law of chap. 14: 34 is placed alongside chap. 11:5 of the same epistle in which Paul refers to the fact, without a condemnatory word, that women were accustomed to both pray and preach in public.

The quotation theory is confirmed when considered in detail. "It is not permitted," says someone, for "women to speak," as also saith the law." As there is no such law from Genesis to Malachi of any such law "the law" referred to must have been the Jewish Oral Law, which in the Talmud is given as follows: "It is a shame for a woman to let her voice be heard among men."

This in itself should be sufficient to show that the apostle who labored so earnestly to free the Christian church from the shadow of Judaism was not expressing his own conviction in the language attributed to him. Paul never applied to "the law" for the guidance of the church, but declared that believers were "dead to the law."

As to women "asking questions of their husbands at home" it is unthinkable that the apostle would have sent such a message back to heathenism, or to Judaism for spiritual help, for the husbands of some were not yet converted.

"What is it, then," says Paul, "when ye come together, each one has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation." As this would produce confusion he directs that each one may speak "by course" but all "unto edifying," "for ye all (women as well as men) can prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be comforted," (vs. 31 R.V. marg.).

How the early church understood Paul's reply to their questions on the subject is seen in Acts 21:9, referring to Philip's four daughters which "did prophesy," showing that not even a year after the Corinthian epistle was written were the women silenced.

Take the second passage from Paul's epistles—which has sealed the

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Hips of women for centuries, even when the gift of prophecy had been bestowed upon them—1 Cor. 11: 3-16. The real purpose of the passage was to stop the practice of Jewish Christian men veiling or wearing the "tallith" in worship, which was a sign of condemnation of sin. Paul replies: "Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonoreth his head,—i.e. Christ, who had atoned for his sins. "But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her (matrimonial) head," inasmuch as the Jewish Oral Law decreed that if a woman did not cover her head she should be "shorn." A Jew favorably disposed towards his wife's profession of Christianity and unveiling in worship might be compelled to divorce his wife if she unveiled. Therefore says Paul, in effect, if unveiling her head in the church might involve such consequences she is not commanded to unveil like her husband. In verses 11 and 12 he reminds both men and women of their oneness "in the Lord" neither being able to do without the other. His final word is that they were "like among themselves" and decide "if it were seemly for a woman to pray unto the Lord unveiled"—a plain statement changed by the translator into a question by the addition of an interrogation mark not in the original.

The third obscure passage in Paul's writings, upon which the misrepresentation of his teaching about women is based, is 1 Tim. 2:8-11, written ten years later than his first letter to the Corinthians—"Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over man, but to be in quietness for Adam was first formed, then Eve."

Apart from the historical light upon the circumstances calling forth these words it is difficult to understand what the apostle means. He had probably been in Spain when he heard of the martyrdom of the Roman church under Nero in 64 A.D., and now three years later he is writing this letter from Rome. All Christians were in the greatest peril, especially the women. This was due to two causes referred to by Locky in his History of European Morals as "the very conspicuous position of female influence assumed in the great work of the conversion of the Roman Empire" and "another peculiarity of the peculiar animosity against Christians was the constant interference with domestic life, arising from the great number of female conversions."

Paul says, "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place lifting up holy hands—in like manner also the women."—Prof. Ramsay says that "the inevitable sense of the word is that the whole body of women is to be understood as affected by what has been said about men."

They were not to adorn themselves like men but to pray like men. Then in order to meet the dire necessity of such perilous times he gives the following prudential measure: "Let the women be in quietness (not "silence") with all subjection, but permit not a woman to teach," "a prohibition not for all time but while the lives of women would be imperilled by so doing."

The apostle's mind then goes back to Eden and to the promise "she shall be saved through the child bearing." If she were saved then by faith in the incarnation and death of the promised Deliverer, how much more now reasons the apostle when the Saviour has come to save her to the very full from all that the incarnation and death obtained for her.

Therefore in view of the light thrown upon these passages by Dr. Bushnell women students of the Word of God are forced to the conclusion that the status of Christian women and their right to speak or pray in the assembly of God's saints most vitally concerns "the church which is His Body." If as Paul teaches, Gal. 3:28, the Cross has removed "the middle wall of partition" between "male and female" in the service of God, Christian women can no longer be kept with on the status of the fall and Christian men on the status of the atoning work of Christ, nor can women members of that body fail to carry out the will of their Risen Head by checking the manifestation of the spirit through all its members.

"God's time has come for the emancipation of women," says Mrs. Penn-Lewis. "Woe to the church if they are not emancipated for Christ and His service: Woe to the 'Serpent' if those whom he has oppressed for so long lay hold of the fact of his utter defeat and victory and in the power of their Triumphant Head turn upon their foe in full assurance of victory!"

Yours truly
—B. CARR-HARRIS.

No "Red" Sympathizers Wanted.
Kingston, Jan. 10.—(To the Editor): I notice in your advertisement of A. B. C. this "There is no room in this country for the Reds," declares the Labor Leader of Toronto. Canadian labor can make no finer or wiser resolve than to kick out all Bolsheviks and make way for the true Britishers, or British-Canadians who have fought for freedom and peace. Statements are being made in certain factories that a plan is afoot to bring in workers to run them for seven dollars a week, where the present wages given by some firms are insufficient according to the present prices of food, which are daily becoming higher. I can see trouble brewing for the labor class, but not through any fault of their own. It will be through the fault of those who, if we sum up their conversion, are determined not to allow the laborer to rise above his present station.

During a recent strike here those who were truly British in their action and kept the work going were promised every protection, and were protected until a stranger took the reins of office. Then, of course, the old works changed; new ideas and rules were used, and the old hands were given the hint to leave, forcing the old Kingston people to leave the city to make way for new people.

We hear some people saying that the Germans should be compensated for what they have lost, and it makes one wonder whether such people are true Britishers or not. Yet they praise the British before a Britisher, and disapprove of the British before a non-Britisher. That sounds as if they were Bolsheviks.

Now, Mr. Editor, for the benefit of our British Empire, would it not be a good plan to see that no persons

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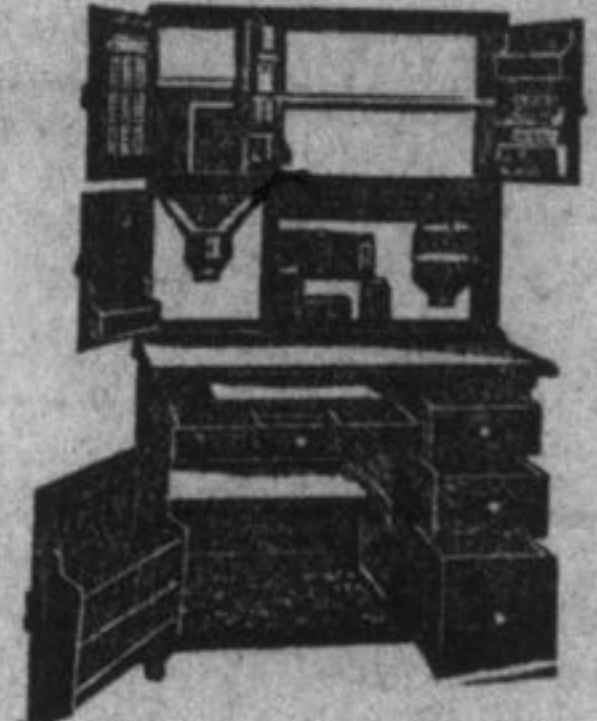
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