

1894 Free Methodist General Conference Debates on Ordaining Women

Editor's Notes: This is a transcript of the debate on ordaining women at the 1894 Free Methodist General Conference. Prior to the 1894 General Conference B.T. Roberts, the denomination's founder and general superintendent, had passed away after trying at the 1890 General Conference to also get the ordination of women passed. In many of the pro-ordination speeches you will see quoted, "He being dead yet speaketh" in reference to Roberts desire to see women ordained. Even though he had passed away his presence was still felt and heard in some of the passionate defenses of women's ministry. However, the measure was sent back to the annual conferences after the 1890 General Conference to hear the voice of the people, and as the following graph illustrates it was a divisive issue. In his address at the 1894 General Conference Norrington of Canada alludes to electioneering and lack of education at annual conferences on the question of women's ordination. Also, B.T. Roberts book 'Ordaining Women' was banned for sale at several annual conferences and the comments and lack of denominational support for his book in The Free Methodist prior to the 1894 General Conference illustrates the tension in church leadership over this question. This transcript is taken from the General Conference Daily Magazine, edited by J.G. Terrill. All editorial comments by him are in italics with his name following the comment. My comments are also in italics but are not credited. The punctuation, spelling and capitalization are all original to the General Conference Daily manuscript. The speeches, like at the 1890 General Conference, were not published in order. So take that into account when reading through the debate.

- Christy Mesaros-Winckles

Vote on Ordaining Women

(The issue taken by to annual conferences for decision after the 1890 General Conference)

Conference	Yes Votes	No Votes
Texas	5	6
Louisiana	3	3
Oregon and Washington	22	10
California	22	14
Southern California	15	6
North Michigan	13	65
West Iowa	14	23
West Kansas	39	10
Nebraska	21	3
Iowa	21	11
East Michigan	17	56
Colorado	15	12
Michigan	11	32
Kansas	24	24
Minnesota and North Iowa	13	11

Genesee	17	57
Ohio	18	14
Missouri	12	9
Illinois	31	27
Susquehanna	22	22
Canada	9	36
New York	3	34
Central Illinois	31	27
South Dakota	10	22
North Minnesota	24	3
Wabash	24	20
North Indiana	7	9
Pittsburg	42	18
Total:	503	633

Fifth Sitting – Monday October 15, 1894

Editorial Notes – October 16, 1894

*The speech of Levi Wood will be good reading matter for years to come. All the speeches were able and well delivered. Some of the speakers “slopped” over a little with the unnecessary and indelicate, but on the whole the debate has been far more decorous, and therefore pleasant and agreeable than that four years ago. The Daily thinks the brethren are growing in grace.-
Terrill*

D.J. Santinier (New York): The Genesee conference in 1891 which then comprised nearly all the church passed the following:

‘Question 1. Do we as a church, approve of female laborers? Answer. Most heartily.

It is the duty of all Christian women to exercise in social and public meetings, by way of prayer, personal testimony, or exhortation, according as their abilities may warrant or the occasion may offer.

Question 2. Do we approve of female preaching? Answer. We do not. And for the following reasons.

1. We do not find it authorized in the Old Testament Scriptures.
2. We do not find it authorized in the New Testament Scriptures.
3. On the contrary, it is clearly intimated in the word of God that woman is not designed for the office of the holy ministry.
4. It clashes with the ordinary duties and relations of the female sex.
5. It tends to awaken prejudices and produce confusion in carrying on the work of God.
6. It is contrary to the usages of the church in all ages; the Methodist church forming no exception. That the practice is anti-Wesleyan may be seen from the following language of John Wesley in his advice to Mrs. Crosby: ‘The Methodists do not allow of women preachers. In public you may properly enough intermix short exhortations with prayer; but keep as far from what is called preaching as you can: therefore never take a text; never speak in continued discourse, without some

break, above five or six minutes. Tell the people, 'We shall have another prayer-meeting at such a time and place.' If Hannah Harrison had followed these few directions, she might have been as useful now as ever (Works, vol. 7, p. 28, 29)' From this attitude concessions were made, from time to time, until 1874. The paragraph on evangelists appeared, which met the mind of those who thought a woman ought to do public work for God but ought not be a regular preacher. The other side favored this as it was a step in the direction they desired and it gave them leverage.

It was seventeen years after the church was organized before a woman was sent as a delegate. In the battle on the subject eight years ago another concession was made to this radical movement. At that time the opponents of this movement claimed it was unscriptural and would lead to putting woman into every department, from the regular pastorate to the general superintendency. This was denied and the mild question asked: "What harm can there be in admitting a few godly women into the quarterly and annual conferences? The New York conference sent a request to the general conference to permit the whole church to vote on the question. That request was ignored and the measure passed. One of our preachers left the church on that account, and many both of the ministry and laity were disheartened, and have not been able since then to work with the same zeal as before, because a majority vote of the general conference had put them into the necessity of appearing to be inconsistent in supporting a church that had in their opinion taken unscriptural ground or of withdrawing from the church of their choice.

The New York conference by a vote protested against this action and agreed to do all possible to prevent its being a permanent thing. Now we are blandly told that no one questions the right of woman to enter the other and more important departments, and that we cannot consistently deny her the right of being ordained.

Thus one wrong step taken is urged a reason for another and further step in the same direction. This may be good policy to carry a measure, but will it tend to build up God's work?

How do the advocates of this 'reform against nature' dispose of the scriptures which assign women another sphere of usefulness?

Over twenty different plans have been devised to explain away such scripture passages. It is not infrequent for the same author to contradict himself as well as the Bible and explain and construe passages in several ways, any of which, if received and applied, would undermine the Bible. They call in question the New Testament itself, as a permanent and final revelation when it stand in the way of their favorite reform. One of the advocates answers this question in our paper, 'They were forbidden out of respect to the customs of the age. Modest women in that day did not appear in public with their heads uncovered when they could they began to do this without going against their modesty?) They dishonored their head - their husbands, or their parents. It is right for them now to pray or prophesy with their head uncovered, for an uncovered head does not cause reproach.' We might add except in the eyes of those who believe the whole Bible to be of a permanent character as revelation. It seems a little audacious that a writer on a reform should assign another reason than Paul himself assigned when he wrote it. He assigned as a reason for this command, 'The head of a woman is a man.' This writer discovered another reason namely: 'out of respect for the customs of the age.' If this discovery were true it would prove Paul preached 'the customs of the age'

instead as he declared the commandment of God. 'If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write are the commandments of God.' 1 Cor. 14, 37. Further, if a change of custom annuls the commandments of God, how long will it take us to get rid of the whole Bible. Dr. Munhall said that the texts on dress were obsolete and we should treat those on the women question the same way.

Then dress as you like, 'it was written out of respect to the customs of the age.'

When this higher criticism gets through the Bible it may leave us the covers. One author tells us that I Cor. 14: 24 is a local and temporary prohibition. This conclusion is reached because it says, 'Your women.' I want to protest against such sophistry.

Who is he writing to?

The answer will settle who is meant by 'Your woman.'" This may be found in the first chapter and second verse: 'Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place calls upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.' If our people call on God it means their women then.

This would apply readily to other passages as to the ones in question. Formalists defend themselves with the same arguments. I met a man in New Jersey who claimed that he had outgrown and got beyond the New Testament entirely. He thinks the whole book was temporary! Martin Luther says: 'I will not allow you to give to the scriptures more senses than one. As to your making such repeated attempts as these: It may be also understood thus, it may also be answered thus, it may be literally interpreted thus, it may be mystically interpreted thus. Away with all these 'may best'.' These **** are mere loop-holes of escape, **** By using these you evince that you go upon the tip-toe of caution, and would reduce everything to a doubt. Speak thus: This is the meaning of the passage, and it cannot be understood otherwise. You will keep to one uniform sense of the scriptures as I always do, and always have done.

'This is the way of proceeding is to be a divine, the former a sophist.'

One states these passages are among the things hard to be understood, therefore nothing positive could be inferred from them: afterwards he admits their meaning but claims the prohibitionists are only temporary. This takes the foundation from under us. For if we once we admit one passage to be temporary we cannot tell but the whole Bible is so too.

We are to believe that, because the word deacon is sometimes applied to a minister, therefore when the word is applied to a woman, it means that she was an ordained preacher?

The word deacon means servant. One definition is, 'to have to do with dust and dirt,' A real preacher serves the people in that capacity. A woman may convey a collection, as Phebe likely did to the poor, for a society, and she thus becomes a servant to the church as well as to the poor. That does not make her a minister, does it?

Paul writes: 'Assist in her in whatsoever business she hath need of thee.' This term escapes the notice of our most acute and observant brethren on the other side of this question. She was doubtless there on this mission of charity, which is more like business than the work of an ordained preacher. The Bible nowhere applies the word preach or teach to a woman, except to forbid it. Her public exercises are referred to under the head of prophesying and praying. The word 'didasko' translated teach, teacheth, and teaching, occurs 95 times in the New Testament, and but twice in that

number of times refers to woman and each time with disfavor. In I Timothy 2:12 we have one instance: 'I suffer not a woman to teach.' Again, in Revelation 2:20, 'Notwithstanding I have a few times against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach.' The grammatical construction shows that it was wrong for them to suffer her to teach, and in the same construction it is placed in the list of sins mentioned in the verse. The words translated preach, preaching, etc. occur perhaps, over 100 times in the New Testament, and not once, that I can find is she told to preach, nor once that she did preach. Two or three times it is written that she prophesied. Several women were called prophetesses, and we are told how women are to dress or appear when prophesying. But the word is not the same in the Greek as those translated to preach and teach, neither is the meaning the same. This difference at least does inspiration make in the public exercise of male and female in the church.

The following comments are from Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, I Cor. 14: 34: Unless they are under extraordinary impulse of the Spirit. For in other cases it is 'not permitted them to speak,' – by way of teaching in public assemblies; but to 'be in subjection' to the man – whose proper office is to lead and to instruct the congregation. 1 Tim. 2:12, "To usurp authority over the man' – by public teaching. Rev. 2:20, 'But thou sufferest that woman Jezebel,' – who ought not to teach at all. I Tim. 2:12 to teach and seduce my servants.

It will be seen that Wesley held that prophesying was to speak under a direct divine impulse. This is very different from the set teaching and preaching of the regular ministry. Such a one can not have a regular appointment which would assume that this gift is ever present. To ordain, or permanently set apart for the ministry, as we understand it could not apply to the prophesying of the New Testament. Neither the Bible nor Wesley were in favor of making regular, ordained preachers from the female sex.

To permanently set apart for preaching is so obviously against nature and the Bible-described duties of women that we can hardly see how there can be any diversity of opinion.

I wish to give an illustration. And that I might not appear to be immodest I would say it is a quotation from a speech by a woman at the last general conference. "I remember reading of a man out in the Rocky mountains who when a part of his flock of sheep were messing at night, choose from his shepherd dogs, the one that must leave her puppies. The night was dark and the sheep were astray in the mountains, but the master said, 'She will never come back till she finds them.' She came in the morning weary and foot-sore, but she brought the lambs. As she dropped down beside her little ones and almost instantly fell asleep while they were nursing, every eye was moistened with tears.' (*This speech was given by Clara Wetherald in 1890*)

In this illustration the dog represents the woman and the puppies her children. Now I want to say if that dog is to represent my wife and the puppies my children she shall stay at home and take care of the puppies.

My illustration on the other side, is the group in the Smithsonian institute, where a large female bird in a hollow tree takes care of the eggs and young while the male glues the entrance to the next, making the aperture so small that the female can not get away. Then he supplies her with food.

God's word declares, 'I will therefore that the young women marry, bear children, guide the house, give non occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.' These to be ordained it declares, should be men. If this be not so our opposers must show that women have wives and are commanded to rule over their households.

Levi Wood (Genesee Conference): This Greek word (*diakonio*), in its noun form, has the generic, or general meaning of a servant, or one who serves. It occurs in the Greek Testament in the noun form 51 times. It is translated 46 times. It is transferred 5 times. When it is translated it is rendered either "servant" or "minister" – these words being very nearly if not quite synonyms.

In the following texts it applies to those who from pure love for the saints are willing to assist or serve them; it does not express or imply any official position: 'Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your diakonos – minister.' Matt. 20, 26 and Mark 10,43. 'But he that is greatest among you, shall be your diakonos – servant; i.e., your deacon. Matt. 23, 2. And he sat down and called the twelve, and saith unto them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and diakonos – servant of all."

In the following texts it means anyone who serves Christ – it does not imply any office. 'If any man diakonio – serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant – diakonos – be; if any man serve – diakonio- me, him will my Father honor.' John 12:26.

In the following text the word applies to a civil officer among the Romans. 'Rulers are not a terror to good words, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister – diakonos – of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.' Rom. 13: 3,4.

In the following texts it means common servant, implying no official position whatever. 'His mother saith unto the servants – diakonoi- deacons, whatsoever he saith unto you do it.' John 2,5. Verse 9 reads: 'When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants- diakonio- who drew the water knew.) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom," etc.

In the following texts the word applies to ordained ministers of Christ who serve him preaching the gospel and in the ordinances of his church – but it is used as in other places, in the generic or general sense to denote a servant or one who serves; a minister, or one who ministers. The kind of service or ministry rendered whether civil, ecclesiastical, or in some service in common life; or whether the service is that of a minister of the gospel is always determined by the context or connection, and not by the word itself. There are, however, five exceptions to this rule which we will speak of soon.

'Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers – diakonoi (deacons) by whom ye believe even as the Lord gave to every man?' I Cor. 3,5. 'Who hath also made us able ministers – diakonio (deacon) of God, and our fellow-laborer in the gospel of Christ.' I Thess. 3:2. 'As ye also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister – diakonio (deacon) of Christ.' Col. 1:7. 'But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do. Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister – diakonos – (deacon) in the Lord," etc. There are other texts of like import. See 2 Cor. 6:4 and 11:23; Eph. 3:7, Col. 1:23,25; I Tim. 4:6.

False prophets or teachers are called deacons – ministering false doctrine to people. 'And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers – diakonio (deacons) of righteousness," etc. 2 Cor. 11: 14, 15.

Christ himself is called a deacon. 'Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister – diakonos – deacon of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.' Rom. 15:8. Christ was the minister – i.e. the deacon or servant of circumcision, in this way – he was the author and dispenser of that system of religion under Moses of which circumcision was the sign and seal.

Angels are referred to as deaconizing, that is, serving as deacons, in ministering to the saints. 'Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister – diakonio (the word in its verb form) to those who shall be the heirs of salvation?' Heb. 1:14

The word 'ministry' means service, the service or labor of Christ's ministers. It is from diakonio, to serve, and means the service of preaching the gospel, and administering the ordinances and affairs of the church.

The following are specimen texts: 'We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry –diakonia- of the word.' Acts 6:4. 'The ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.' Acts 20:24. And fourteen other texts.

Christ was a deacon; the twelve apostles were deacons; the ordained elders were deacons; all faithful Christians are deacons; civil rulers were deacons; all common servants were sometimes called deacons –though doulos was the more common word for servant. Even the angels, as ministering spirits, are said to deaconize – i.e. they act as God's servants in ministering to his elect.

Whenever the word has been translated, either in its noun or verb form, but the English, words servant, or service, or serve; or minister, or ministry, or ministering, it is always used in its general sense to mean service rendered, or a servant who serves, and does not express or imply any official position. It is true that persons in an official position in both state and church were sometimes called deacons, but their official position is not determined by the word itself, but by the connection.

In the sixth chapter of the Acts we have an account of the appointment of seven men to a particular temporal work in the church by the imposition of the hand of the apostles. These men are sometimes called deacons in theological books, but they are nowhere called deacons in the Bible. They did not belong to that class of church officers who are called deacons in the English New Testament. They were appointed or ordained to a specific work in the church for the time being, and there is no evidence that they were designed to be permanent officers in the church. They were appointed to look after the welfare of the Grecian widows, of whom complaint was made that they were neglected in the daily ministrations; and doubtless to do various things pertaining to the temporal welfare of the church. They were deacons in a sense, but not in the sense of being permanent officers in the church. They did not belong to the order of deacons, which order was instituted a little later on.

As to this order or class of church officers it is mentioned but five times where the word deacon is used – the only instances of the use of that word in the English Bible. In these cases the word is not translated but transferred. It is simply anglicized – i.e., so changed as to conform to the grammar of the English language; and then put into angelicized form into the English Testament. There is a reason for this. To illustrate: St. Paul in Phi. 1:1 says, 'Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints which are in Christ Jesus at Phillipi, with bishops and deacons.' Now the word here transferred by the use of the word minister. It would have been tautological, for bishops are ministers. Had it been rendered servants, it would not have designated a particular

kind or class of church officials which it was intended to do. But by transferring the word the particular class of church officials intended to be addressed is very clearly designated.

The same is true of this word where it occurs four times in the third chapter of First Timothy. They were a class order of men who were particularly charged with the care of the temporalities in the church. The phrase, 'office of a deacon' is twice used. We quote 'Likewise, must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not give to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and a great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus.'" – I Tim. 3:18-13.

Observe, these were men. There is no account, or even mention in the New Testament of any female elder or deacon as a church officer. So, in the Old Testament times there was no priestess. And the priesthood was the regularly ordered ministry of that dispensation; and elders or bishops, - these words meaning one and the same officer – are the regularly ordained ministry of the New Testament.

It is of no avail to argue as some do. To prophesy is to preach. There were female prophets; therefore, female preachers, and a preacher may and ought to be ordained. This is sophistical. No prophet, considered simply as a prophet, whether male or female, was ever ordained by any specific form of ordination, either in the Old or New Testament times. Those who were styled prophets by way of eminence were the extraordinary messengers of God, and were appointed or ordained only by him to do some specific work. The Spirit called 'The Spirit of prophecy,' might, under Moses, rest on a priest or on one of the common people. So, under Christ, it may rest on a bishop or a layman, a woman or a man. No man is a minister of the gospel except by virtue of being a prophet, except in that extraordinary sense, he is a minister or messenger of God, not by the imposition of human hands, but by affiliation of the Holy Spirit. A priest was a priest continually from the age of thirty to fifty; so, a minister of the gospel is a minister for life. But this 'spirit of prophecy' comes and goes like the wind, now powerful, now feeble, just as God wills. It may last for a day, a week a month, a year; for any time, long or short, or for a life time. Elijah was a powerful prophet, but he was not a priest; he was not ordained by human hands. So of all the great prophets of God. We might as well talk about ordaining the falls of Niagara, in order to give its waters power to roar, as to talk about ordaining God's prophets. They will speak words of fire and of power whether ordained or not. We say with Moses, 'Would God, that all the Lord's people were prophets.'

We come now to consider the case of Phebe mentioned in Rom. 16:1,2 – 'I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a servant' – diakanos – (deacon) 'of the church which is at Cenchrea; that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you, for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.'

This text is very earnestly pressed into service by those who contend for female ordination. The argument runs thus: We will throw it into the form of a syllogism:

Major. - All deacons are ministers.

Minor. – Phebe was a deacon.

Conclusion: - Therefore, Phebe was an ordained minister.

The error lies in the major proposition. IT is not true that all deacons are ministers. In our investigation we have seen that all Christians are deacons of Christ – i.e. are his servants. That the servants who carried water and wine at the marriage of Cana in Galilee, were deacons; that civil rulers were deacons; that the king's servants who bound the man that had not on the wedding garment, were deacons, etc.

There is no proof that Phebe was an officer of any kind in the church. She may have been, but there is absolutely no proof of it. There are three kinds of service. First, the service of slaves, bought and sold. Second, hired servants, who were for a price. Third, willing and voluntary servants, who serve the church because they love it; not a forced service as slaves; not a paid service as hirelings; but a free and glad service from pure love of the cause. We know there are many very faithful servants of Christ who serve the church faithfully and yet do not occupy any official position in it. There is nothing to show that Phebe was not a servant or a deacon of this kind. Indeed, had she been such a willing and faithful deacon or servant of the church, without any official position, the apostle in speaking of her would use just such language as is found in this passage of scripture. So, this arrangement is shown to be utterly fallacious.

Whatever may be said in cyclopedias, dictionaries or ecclesiastical histories, about deaconesses in the early church, it remains a fact that nothing of the kind is mentioned or in any way referred to, in the Bible. The sisters may sing, pray, testify, exhort, preach if they can, go as missionaries, evangelize with our without license, hold a variety of meetings – get as many saved as they can, build them up in holiness, but let them not intrude themselves into that place in God's church wherein he has never placed them. God knows where to place all his creatures, and his will is best. All his works praise him, All his providences show forth his wisdom. All his dealings with his people show forth his great love for them. All beautiful things are lovely in their season and in their place, but out of season, out of place, their loveliness soon vanishes away.

Curry (Susquehanna Conference): I have not been heard on this question. I have written but one article on it, and this I was informed, came after the "Free Methodist" was closed on that subject; then four weeks after that time we had a four-column supplement. I waited for the appearance of my article, but it never appeared. We have not all been heard on this question. We all have a right to be heard.

Jones (Editor of the Free Methodist): Mr. President: inasmuch as my administration as editor of the "Free Methodist" is called in question, may I be allowed to explain?

Chair: You shall be allowed.

Jones: A few weeks after the adjournment of the last general conference Dr. Curry sent me an article on the ordination of women. I wrote him that inasmuch as the question had just been thoroughly discussed, and settled for the time being, by the general conference. It did not seem best to commence the discussion of the question in the "Free Methodist" so soon; but if he would allow me to hold his manuscript I would be glad to publish his article among the first when the paper was opened to that question. This he declined to do, and his manuscript was returned. It is true that in a short time a supplement, treating on the subject of ordaining women, appeared. It was a mere business transaction between our Publishing House and the writer of the supplement. It had no relation whatever to my work as editor of the church paper.

Curry: First, I wish to call attention to women's pristine condition. The position she occupies by the appointment of her Creator. In that appointment of the great Head of the

universe, woman took her place as a joint ruler with man, without recognition whatever. She was stated to be a helpmeet for him, it implied equality of capacity, otherwise she would not have been a helpmeet. There you will find woman's position in the world and in the church on earth and in heaven in reference to her relations to man.

After the fall this relation was changed and woman was placed under penal restrictions because of the transgression, and when this heaven- appointed relationship between man and woman ceases, man from that hour down to the present time, has become a miserable, disgraceful shameful failure, and will continue to be until woman is restored to her pristine condition. All arguments drawn from historical facts, based upon woman's condition under penal restrictions as pointing to woman's true and proper relation in the church of our Redeemer, are misleading and sophistical and must ever lead to wrong conclusions. The question is not what was woman's condition under the penalty of a broken law, but what is woman's true position in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ when redemption has wrought its purpose, and she is restored, and all penal restrictions are removed. Hence, even in any arguments drawn from her position in the beginning of the gospel dispensation in reference to the history of the church under those circumstances, do not fully and fairly reflect woman's true condition, when redemption has wrought its work (and Jesus Christ came to redeem woman as well as man from under the curse of the law). And my brethren will set her down to keep her down, but God says, 'Let her rise,' and she is rising and you cannot turn her back. Let us look for a moment at woman's condition as she stood before the fall next to him, nearest to him, and having a part with him in all he had to do. Of course when woman is restored that must also follow.

In the next place I wish to call you attention to woman's relation to the redemption of the world. As a woman stood first and next to the first Adam, so woman is to stand first, and did stand first, to the second Adam, when the Lord sent him to the world. He was seed of the woman. A virgin was to conceive, and no one of the masculine part of our race was to have the least thing to do with this existence. God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.

Jesus Christ was made of better and more refined material than is found in the masculine part of humanity. This is a fact clearly stated in the word of God. For this reason Jesus Christ stands nearer to woman than he stands to man, and he recognized that relation when he was raised from the dead. Jesus Christ saw fit to meet and reveal himself, as naturally he should, to his nearest kin. He appeared to those that stood nearest to him by divine appointment, and I want to say to this conference that the first heave-appointed angels, ordained by Jesus Christ, commissioned to preach the gospel of the grace of our God, were women. Now they ask us about some truth of woman's position in the church, and woman's being ordained; and some of you say, 'these were not ordained.' Let us see. The angels appeared to those women. He told them he knew what they were after, and he said 'go.' Here is the commission. It is ordained by an angel and a commission to go. 'Go and tell my disciples that I have risen from the dead.' The whole church at that time was embraced in that phrase. Within the scope of this commission is embraced the whole of the gospel message to the world, and yet many have reversed it. You say, 'woman, get out of the way here, clear the track, you have no business to preach this gospel. We are appointed to preach the gospel to you, and so get back.' But Jesus Christ appointed these very women to preach the gospel as you all know, and they should not be denied the privilege. But say you, 'they were not ordained.' But they were ordained, and in a higher sense than the twelve disciples were ordained. They were only appointed by Jesus Christ, but these were

appointed by an Angel of Light and Jesus Christ. And I think that is the only case of the kind between the lids of the Bible. We have ten cases – but I see we must hasten. Ten cases of ordination found in the New Testament scriptures, and only ten. I know the word ‘ordination’ is used in various other places but not in the sense of being set apart by the laying on of hands, and I challenge proof to the contrary. Out of these ten cases of ordination, seven of them were not ordained to the Christian ministry at all. It had no reference either to the preaching of the word or to the administering of the sacrament.

In the other three cases the Lord called upon the church to set apart two of them for the work to which he himself had called them. Those two were Paul and Barnabas.

Now Paul had an understanding of his commission, and he said that he was ordained to preach the word. That was his ordination and he acted up to it. He had never baptized any in his whole work in the ministry but in two cases, and he distinctly declares that that was not his special work.

Well, but what about the ordination of women? Why, as sure as you live, if we do not look out, they are going to get up to the baptismal font sometime and baptize someone’s baby, or some other woman who is breathing her last. But what about those ordained baptizers? Brethren, turn to your Bibles, and put your finger upon a single case of a person who had been formally ordained. I challenge the proof. It is not in the records. The twelve apostles, Adam Clarke says, were not ordained in the sense in which we use the word, and in the revised version of the Testament it is so revised. There was not one of the twelve ordained, and yet we are making the subject turn as though much importance was attached to the idea that we allow women to do something that is incidental to our primary calling. Again, I challenge any one of you to prove that there was during the days of the apostle any ordination to administer the sacrament. Put your finger on it if you can find it. The simple fact was that Jesus Christ understood the condition of his followers to preach the gospel, evangelize the nations, and bring them to himself as the primary work.

We have already, but not without many struggles reached the point where we unanimously say, ‘Let them preach. Yet let them preach. Send them even to our circuits, and give them a field of labor across the briny deep. Let them live and labor and toll in their efforts to preach this gospel to the heathen, and after they have got a whole lot converted, send them some one from America to do the small matter of baptizing them.’ Among the early Methodists, they believed that the call to preach carried with it a duty of baptizing and administering the sacrament in the house of God. And we have a higher authority than that. We have the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in this matter. When he gave the commission to go teach, go Julius, go disciple – use what words you please – teach all nations. That is the first work. That is the primary work. You have already given women an equal place with man in doing this work, and yet we are coming up here and placing the cart before the horse; we are exalting the men, and saying to the woman, yes, yes, yes, you may follow in the footsteps of your Jesus and the holy apostles. You may fulfill the prediction referred to in the 68th Psalm, in the age in which Ethiopia is stretching out her hands to God.

Adam Clarke says the original embraced the thought that the woman preachers were a great multitude. IN the very age in which we live that is being fulfilled. We admit women to fields of labor and to preach the gospel and then step in between them and their duty with our interdictions and send them out to their fields handicapped and hindered that some man may come along and baptize somebody. Here is one that has gone as a

missionary. God has gone with her, heaven's ordination has been given to her. I think more of heaven's ordination than of any seven men on earth. The Holy Spirit has been with them in their work and a large number have been converted.

There may not be an ordained man in forty miles of them. They want to be baptized as soon as they are converted. My dear friends, I know you ought to. I know the Bible teaches it, but our church has stepped in and says, 'woman you must get out of here; we do not recognize you as a helpmeet in this case.' That is what they do. We send our missionaries out two by two. They cross the ocean, got to the wilds of Africa and preach the gospel to the heathen, and they are saved and added to the church. I see one of those converts with strength nearly gone, the breath feeble, the sweat gathering on his marble-like brow. He turns to the one led him to Christ and says to her: 'Give me the communion before I die. Let me eat the bread that symbolized his body, and drink of the wine that symbolized the blood that bought my soul.' But she cannot administer it though he die, for she is a woman. Lord help us. I am full of this subject but will not take more of your time.

Owen (Susquehanna): I did not think I would say anything on this question, but want to answer points that my friend has tried to set before this body. In the first place he has taken the position of woman's equality with man as a ruler and endeavored to prove it from the term in the Bible, 'helpmeet.' I contend that the word helpmeet does not mean equality; it simply means helper. I am not to stand here on this floor to prove this body that woman is not in many respects the superior of man, but my contention is that God designed that man should be the leader and ruler, and just as the word says, 'woman shall be a helpmeet unto him.' We have a president of the United States and a vice-president, and no one would contend that the vice-president was equal in authority to the president. He is simply a helper in official matters. My friend has also endeavored to establish the precedent in regard to this fact that man had nothing to do with the conception of the Son of God. I wish to meet this by the statement: though man had nothing to do with it we all admit that God Almighty and the Holy Ghost overshadowed the virgin. WE must also remember the product of overshadowing was not a woman, but a man in the person of the Son of God. The doctor has given some very good arguments in favor of women preaching, but that is not the question before us. The question before us is, shall woman be ordained or shall she not be ordained? The doctor presents the argument that not one of the twelve was ordained to baptize. Now, then, on the supposition that we cannot prove that they were ordained to baptize, his argument proves just as much against woman baptizing as against men baptizing. I wish to make these points clear and meet them while they are before my mind.

If anyone else steps out and makes such an argument, by the grace of God I will blow a hole through it if I can.

Norrington (Canada): A few reasons why I will vote for ordaining women:

1. I enjoy that religion which saves me from respect of persons.
2. I believe some women are called of God to preach the gospel, and have been commissioned under the great commission, which also authorizes them to baptize. Read Matt. I believe women are included in this commission, and I challenge proof to the contrary.
3. I believe the 130 votes majority against ordination would have been 260 majority for, had our people been informed on the subject, and had not discussion at some of the annual conferences been suppressed by vote, and had not so much button-

holing and electioneering been done with uninformed persons to induce them to vote against the measure. Farther, on one camp ground I heard a general superintendent and a chairman lightly speak of Brother Roberts' book on the subject of ordination, and its sale was forbidden there. Another ordained opposer said sneeringly, 'Oh! I wouldn't waste time with such a book.' But few of those who have written in the F.M. rehashed Brother Roberts' arguments.

4. Because of the unfair and unfounded objects to ordination of women, noted in the following instances: 1) If women are ordained then they will be compelled to separate from their husbands. 2) Women have no right to the superintendent fund. Granted, but they ought to have. 3) Women cannot at all seasons wade into rivers and lakes and immerse her own candidates. I for five years ordained, etc.
5. The endeavor to suppress the question during this session by calling for an informal vote.
6. Historical authority, ancient and modern, show conclusively that the early apostolic church had an order of ordained female ministers.

[Brother Norrington here read a lengthy extract (pages 22-32, inclusive) from W. A. Sellew's pamphlet: 'Why not Ordain Whom God Calls to Preach his Gospel?' – Terrill]

Published Wed. Oct. 17. 1894 in the General Conference Dailies (Sixth Session Continued)

Matthews (Indiana): *(He begins with the story of Abraham and Lot and how Abraham settled the conflict peaceably. He uses the story to illustrate how there should be no strife in the church.)* I come to the question of ordaining women in the Spirit of Christ. He says ye shall know the truth. That encourages me, Mr. President. We all wish to know the Truth.

Our opponents have given us a very severe 'roasting.' I confess sometimes the articles in our church paper have been exceedingly long, and it has been a lingering process. A vast amount of smoke, but soon a short article from our side of the house, has proven oil to our smart, and being carefully and lovelingly handled, put on the beast of the good Samaritan we have been taken to the inn and convalesced. We are better if you please. Using the parlance of the ring, we are 'boxing for points,' – scientific points. This general conference cannot enact law if they would, and at present they would not if they could. I mean those high up in the councils – those men whom we go and are crying to the multitudes (by order of the Discipline we are going to so mercilessly slaughter). 'These men are the men the church delights to honor.'

No, sir; if the question be left to them, what I have said is true. They would not change the law if they could at this sitting. Why are they so obdurate? Why are they so deaf to the voices of God, reason, and the onward march of our glorious 19th century civilization?

One writer, through the church paper, asked the question, 'Do we want to be associated with freethinkers, universalists and heretics?' adding that 'only such ordain women.' Rather severe on woman; very severe on us. I answer, yes associate me with the very ragtag of beliefs and disbeliefs on this question, if they favor the ordination of women. For God favors it. Are the Free Will Baptists heretics? Are the Congregationalists heretics? They ordain woman.

Jesus Christ favors woman. The angel sent one of the gospel of a risen Savior to proclaim to his disciples the first news of his resurrection.

Vincent (Michigan): The question of the ordination of women will effect the Free Methodist church in the following manner: Some would vote for ordination, if they believed there would be no change in the book of discipline. If this body votes favorable, namely, 'yes,' for the ordination of women, it will necessitate the very important change in our book of discipline at once, providing for that office. Bear this in mind. There are others who would vote favorably to this question with some degree of limitation. If we vote, 'yes,' with some degree of limitation, it will be the same tyranny that you now to avoid, and which is charged to the church by the advocates of ordination.

We have the expressed wish of the church by several annual conferences, touching the question, and why should any feel disposed to act other than in harmony with the voice of the church thus expressed. It seems to be a question agitated only by a few. I believe some of the lady delegates present are opposed to the ordination. If we can produce no further proof in its favor than already produced. I am confident the vote might as well be taken at once. The statement of her equality and a play on the sympathies of this body, is not proof- neither facts. What we ask is facts, proven by chapter and verse from the word of God. The whole of this day so far, has been spent on a mere supposition, and that is briefly comprehended in this, that Phebe was a deacon in the church, is assuming too much at this time. The history of the past, warrants me in saying the church has survived, and under God, accomplished much without this arrangement so unwarranted. And why now, to gratify a few restless spirits among us, make this departure? I am ready to vote.

Wheatlake (Ohio): I would suggest that Brother Hogg supply the brethren on the opposite side of the question with a copy of his Homiletics. I believe it is advised that we are to take texts, as preachers, and stick to them. The text announced by vote of this general conference, that we should discuss the question, 'shall we ordain women?' That the announced text, and lo, the sermon is on the subject as to whether women shall preach or not, and it occurs to me it is an old one. The Burlington conference settled that question twelve years ago, and decided that sisters should preach in the Free Methodist church, and I would like to hear the question discussed as to whether she should be ordained or not, and stop this jumping the track, and come right down to the real issue. I am in favor of the ordination of women. I am somewhat astonished to find such an element in this general conference against our sisters preaching in the Free Methodist church. I declare I am considerably astonished. It seems to be conceded that they are in the majority, and who knows, but being encouraged by their majority, in a few years, they may want to legislate against our sisters taking active part in our religious services. It looks like a movement in that direction, and I think it ought to curtailed, and if possible stopped right here by a majority vote for the ordination of women.

Superintendent Hogg's Closing Speech Closing Monday's Debate

Mr. President: The question before us involves not only the subject of ordination by man's appointment, but that of God's foreordination. The family as an institution is older than the church. God established it before he established either church or state. IN fact the existence of both church and state is based upon the family institution: whatever militates against the family as an institution can never be advantageous to neither church or state but must be detrimental to them both.

God has ordained from the beginning that in all ordinary cases men and women should live together in the marriage relation. God has also ordained that they who enter in to this relation should live together as married people, and rear children for the glory of God. The modern tendency is toward the abolition of the family institution. This spirit is in the air, it pervades society to a lamentable extent. Any spirit which lightly regards the marriage relation or any enactment which tends to disparage the family as an institution must be productive of evil consequences to society in general.

It is a well known fact that in many quarters the woman who fulfills the relation and duties of the wife and mother is looked upon as inferior in her condition, and her attainments to those women who stand outside this relation, and who occupy more public positions on the platform and in the pulpit. I have no sympathy for any spirit which disparages the marriage relation, or lightly esteems the exalted relation of motherhood. I believe I have a keen appreciation of all womanly excellence, but if there is any one relation in which woman may be placed, which commands my admiration of her excellence more than any other, it is the relation of motherhood. We often hear the glory ascribed to John and Charles Wesley for being founders of Methodism. I have often questioned in my own mind, however, if in the day when God adjudicates the affairs of men, Susanna Wesley, who rocked the cradle of Methodism, will be found worthy of greater honor than either of the noble sons she gave to the cause of Christian evangelism, and would to God our preachers would have more fully preach among our people the scriptural doctrine in reference to these important matters.

I maintain, Mr. President, that ordinarily marriage is a disqualification for the general work of ministry on the part of woman, as it is not a disqualification on the part of man. If woman is to be ordained she must be ordained to all the functions of the public ministry, and this makes her eligible to positions in our conferences, to be pastors of the churches and to fill the official positions to which ecclesiastical ordination makes men eligible; but if she be married and according to God's pre-ordained arrangement, living honestly and faithful in the marriage relation she must rear children, guide her house and occupy herself at least to a large extent with domestic cares and responsibilities. Living in this relation and fulfilling the duties that pertain to wifehood and motherhood she must of necessity from time to time be physically disqualified from public duties and at other times confined within the regular domestic cares, that would have interfered with performing the full duties of a Christian minister. There may be exceptional cases in which this principle does not apply, but we are not discussing this question in relation to exceptional cases, but rather as to its general bearing and application.

Then assuredly, from this view of the case, it is evident that marriage itself, to woman, is ordinarily a disqualification for the duties of the Christian ministry, and it is equally evident from scriptures, that in all ordinary cases the marriage relation is enjoined upon both men and women.

If the marriage relation is ordinarily a disqualification for ordination to the ministry, to what class of women shall the right of ordination be accorded: if common sense and scripture assure us that young women are not the proper subjects for such ordination. Young women are especially enjoined in the scripture to 'marry, bear children, guide their house and give non occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.' Any arrangement which tends to interfere with this pre-ordained plan of God is certainly without divine warrant.

I call your attention, Mr. President, and brethren of the conference, to the obligation of our Discipline imposed before the first ordination we recognized can be conferred upon any person. The following questions are asked the candidate and must be solemnly answer to the affirmative.

Page 50, paragraph 119, subdivision 5 and 12: 'Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and his work?'

'Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?'

As ordinarily the married woman who fulfills the marriage obligation cannot consistently devote herself to, or take upon her, these vows, so the young or the unmarried woman have no right, in the ordinary cases, to take upon her these obligations, inasmuch as it would require on her part of the vow of celibacy, which we have no right to exact.

Now as ordinarily, neither married women, nor young women, who are unmarried, are proper subjects of ordination to the regular ministry, so neither will women of advanced age be regarded by any as proper subjects for such ordination; and judging also from what Paul has written, even widows are not eligible to such ecclesiastical, positions unless they be of a certain age; for the young widows are especially directed to marry, and that for reasons of such character as I forbear to quote, but which the apostle Paul has placed on record in his letters to Timothy. The matter of ordaining women, if they are ordained at all, is narrowed down so far as eligible subjects are concerned, to one class, namely, those in or nearing middle life and who still remain in single blessedness; and even in these cases the church has no right, ordinarily, to exact vows which require them to sign away or pledge to forget their right and privilege to marry.

This might be consistent with the administration of the Romish church but it is neither consistent nor lawful under Protestant administration.

I call you to notice the second place that the proposition to make women eligible to ordination lacks the authority of scripture to make it warrantable. Only two examples or instances of supposed ordination having direct scriptural authority have ever been urged by the most ardent advocates of the ordination of woman. Perhaps I might except the assumed examples mentioned by the learned doctor (*Curry*) from Susquehanna conference, but this conference knows, and the good doctor himself ought to know, that the instances he quotes have no application to the question of ordination whatever. The commission to Mary to go and tell the disciples that Jesus was risen from the dead, and had gone before them into Galilee, is by no means a parallel case with ordination, as we are no considering it.

The doctor must have known, as we all know, that his use of the word ordination, in the instance he alleged, was a manifest play on words. We are speaking of ecclesiastical ordination in the technical sense in which it is used in our book of discipline the cases cited, therefore irrelevant. The two cases which are claimed to be scriptural examples of ordination to the word of the ministry are those of Phebe and Junia: but you will remember Mr. President, the admission of our learned, but departed leader, made four years ago [pointing to the picture of Brother Roberts] that noble man. 'the latchet of whose shoes I was never worthy to stoop down and unloose.' That with all his learning and in all his research he had found but two instances in the Bible which he considered unmistakable instances of women being ordained, and yet these are disputed cases. The best critical authority of the church in the ages of Christian history has not recognized these two persons as having been ordained to the regular work of the Christian ministry.

The most that Dr. Adam Clarke allows concerning Junia is that the question is ambiguous and leaves us in doubt as to whether she was an apostle or only a noted person among the apostles. Is it not strange that anyone should seek to claim the authority of Dr. Clarke for an interpretation, which he expressly states is doubtful?

Suppose, however, that these two women were ordained> In that case it must be admitted that their ordination was a very exceptional matter- the only two instances according to the whole history of revealed religion. Certainly one or two exceptional cases during so long a period is not a sufficient warrant for us to make a general law in favor of women being ordained. The scriptures which have already been quotes by brother, are very plain and clear as to woman's ordinary sphere of liberty and usefulness.

It is said by some that this question is wholly one of expediency or inexperience. Some maintain that scripture leave it to the wisdom of the church to determine in reference to matters of this character. Even on that supposition, I think we are not ready for the ordination of women. There are many reasons which, to my mind, make it clear that such an enactment would be highly inexpedient. I will not dwell upon those reasons as my time has nearly expired. I will say, however, that we are at such a crisis in our denominational history as would render the Disciplinary change contemplated by those who urge the ordination of women an occasion of disturbance and distraction among us such as we cannot afford to invite.

I certainly believe this body will wisely determine not to open the way by such enactment as that which is contemplated by the affirmative side of this question, for the elements of discord that have heretofore given us so much trouble to gain farther advantage. So far as I am concerned, I am in favor of ordaining fewer men than we do instead of opening the way for the ordination of women.

Mr. President, I believe the Free Methodist Church will take and maintain a right attitude on this question. I believe there is some wisdom and spirituality among us yet. I am not of the number who regard Free Methodism as dead or dying. I am no pessimist on this subject, if some of my brethren do regard me as pessimistic because of my views on the Lord's coming. I believe the brightest days of the Free Methodist Church are ahead of her. One thing especially encourages me. The brethren who have argued for the ordination of women on this conference floor have not introduced the oft-repeated and offensive statement the friends of this movement flung in our faces four years ago, that our opposition was based wholly on our prejudice. *(B.T. Roberts noted this in his 1890 address.)*

Brethren, you are improving. I thank God for this evidence of your growth in grace. As I am sincere in my position on this subject, so I believe you are sincere in yours. If this question goes against my convictions of what should be done in the case I shall still be loyal to the church. I trust each of you can feel and say the same. When the vote is taken and the matter decided, however, it may go, we will shake hands and be brethren as we have been heretofore. And by and by the difference between us which here exist will all disappear as we gather in the glorious light of the throne of God in heaven.

Sandys *(Possibly a misprint. There is a Sanders from Kansas listed as a delegate):* I have no speech to make, I simply want to record myself. I believe that 'consistency is a precious jewel,' and it seems to me that we are the most inconsistent denomination on the face of the globe on this question. We allow woman a place in our churches to preach, allow them a set in our annual and general conference, and to go as missionaries and evangelists, but simply refuse them ordination. I saw an account some time ago of a man going to the

Adirondack mountains to hunt for deer. He was quite a story-teller. He told of numerous deer, some of them with horns about six feet from end to end. The trees were thick – only about three feet apart. He was hunting one of these deer, and the deer went between trees like a streak of lightning. He was asked, ‘how it is possible that a deer could go through the woods?’ It puzzled him for a while, and then he said, ‘why, he just hauled in his horns and backed out.’ This seems to me to be about the only way we can do. The brother from the Genesee conference has just read a paper which seems to me was much more against the ordination of women. He simply destroyed the ordination of man in trying to dispose of woman. Our brother from the New York conference takes the other side, and his arguments are against women preaching in the church. We grant them the privilege to preach, and I cannot see any consistency in giving women licenses and then saying they are not called to preach the gospel. In regard to women in their family affairs, the Bible says, ‘the husband of one wife’ shall rule the household. If women go out they cannot govern their families as they ought to do. I think we ought to make a rule that elders and deacons who do not rule their house, ought not to be ordained. I think that ought to be as applicable to men as to women, and I am in favor of it because I believe the scriptures teach it. I hope that it will be carried into practice. I was born in Virginia, and my teaching was against women occupying a public position of any kind, but under the illumination of the gospel I believe that in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female, bond or free, but all are one in Christ.

I can see no distinction in the religious life between men and woman. They both have souls, and the scriptures that relate to man, relate also to woman. We may not get to it this time, but I think perhaps it will come in four or eight years.

Arnold (Illinois): I have felt all through the discussion that I should have nothing to say on this subject, but I am like the Irishman who was arrested after hitting a man on the head, who had caused him to provocation. His only excuse was his head was so exceedingly convenient that he could not help it. I have listened attentively to the discussion this afternoon and so many heads have been presented and they are so exceedingly convenient that I cannot help it. The demand has been made that we bring scripture and give chapter and verse in support of the ordination of women. Very well. I will ask those brethren who are opposed to the ordination of women to please bring chapter and verse and give us a scriptural ground for their opposition. I challenge you to do it. Among all of the quotations that have been made thus far, we find several which favor it. I have a little book here which is by Brother Sellev, who is not privileged, by your vote, to be present: consequently, I will make two small quotations from Clark’s Commentary, pages 22-29 of the pamphlet, Romans 16:1: ‘Phoebe is here termed a servant, a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea.’ It is evident that they were ordained to their office by the imposition of the hand of the bishop. Again, on page 30, Robinson’s Bible cyclopedia, page 338 – deacons: ‘They were selected by the people from among themselves, and were presented to the apostles, and by them ordained by the imposition of hands. Persons of both sexes were appointed.’ There seems to be some scripture in favor of the ordination of women, but I fail to hear any quotes that is opposed to it, and the long list of facts and authorities given would seem to me to indicate that in the early church they were ordained as deaconesses, and that deaconesses preached the gospel. I would like to refer to the paper that our brethren from New York conference read with so much earnestness and eloquence. He gave us a very graphic picture, pointing to the dog and puppies, and so on. Now, if that argument means anything it means that a woman shall not preach the gospel. We are not pleading that more women

shall preach the gospel; all we are pleading for is that those who are preaching the gospel or are to be licensed to preach the gospel; shall be more fully equipped for gospel work. That's all. We are not pleading for the multiplication of women preachers, and the paper that the brother read so eloquently is an attack on the church polity as it is now constituted. We are called revolutionists. What shall we call those (shall I use the slang expression) who are 'kicking' against our church polity and Discipline; but the paper referred to is exceedingly encouraging to me. I have not been so much encouraged by any bit of history since this agitation began. It goes back to the earliest history of the church, and gives us the position of the church at that time, and clearly shows that we were not only opposed but most bitterly opposed to women preaching the gospel, or even taking very much part in religious services. What progress have we made? Look at our Discipline to-day? Look at the gospel workers in the Free Methodist church, and see what progress we have made. Shall we say it is in the wrong direction? I think there are few on this conference floor that would make such an assertion. You will thank God through all eternity that we have made progress on this very line. The number of those who will surround the great white throne in heaven will be very materially increased because the Free Methodist Church has been aggressive, and has seen in the female portion of the church a power that could be used for good in the spreading of the scriptural holiness throughout the world. We have been somewhat slow, certain members among us have held back and have not encouraged this department of gospel work. They have said at each step of progress we have made just what they are saying to-day on this conference floor, calling us a little enthusiastic; calling us perhaps a little – well, I will not repeat the word my brethren repeated a little while ago, and thank God somebody has been investigating, and the question has gone on and on, and it will continue to go on. This question is up; it will never be down until it is settled on the right side. Brother Roberts used to so frequently repeat to us, 'no question is ever settled until it is settled right;' so it will be with this question of the ordination of women. I am prepared to vote; I am willing to vote right now, but I think perhaps there are others who wish to speak, and I did not wish to take up as much time as I have taken already.

Sims (Canada): I do not rise to make a set speech. I simply want to refer to the challenge thrown out by a brother from the Illinois conference (*Arnold*). We frequently hear the question asked, can you give us the chapter and verse for the ordination of women. I repeat that question, give us a Bible for it. The good brother instead of answering the questions squarely, challenges the whole conference to give us Bible and verse for the ordination of men. As he wants Bible and verse here it is, Mark 3:14, 'and he ordained twelve, that they should be with him and that he might send them forth to preach.' Least there should be any doubt as to whether there were sisters or not, here are their names: Simon, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot. IF these were these twelve disciples, except Judas Iscariot, that this commission was given. Matt. 28:16, 'then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.'

Mrs. Ida L. Gage (Ohio): Referring to what my brother from the Susquehanna conference (*Owen*) said with regard to the president and vice president of the United States, if I have a proper understanding, the vice president has the authority to perform all the duties of the president in his absence. I come to you as a vice president, and I wish that this question could be settled. I am not an enthusiast on this subject. I am in sympathy with the brother who is in the canoe with the sisters, because, of course, their situation seems to be perilous

at times. My brother who spoke on my left favorably referred to a certain illustration, which to my mind, was out of place (*She is most likely referring to the illustration of the female sheep dog and pups, which keeps coming up again in the debate, and was used by Santinier at this conference and originally used by Clara Wetherald at the 1890 General Conference.*), and yet, looking at it in the light that when our sisters leave their children with their neighbors to go berrying, or help their husbands dig potatoes, no one criticizes it at all. But when they go out to rescue the lost and unsaved, there is a great deal of comment made. I feel very much like the colored man when he thanked God for the 'sperience.' My brother says this is not a testimony meeting, but I want to say just a few words. I have 'sperience' on this line. Some years ago when bound by infidelity and atheism, God send some blessed salvation planks floating down my way. I experienced religion and enjoyed it for fifteen days. God saw fit to lay his hand upon me. I lost my strength and there he saw fit to make me go forth and preach the gospel. When I arose from under the influence of the spirit and left the room, I settled it for time and eternity. I do not think the brethren intend to say things that hurt, but really my heart has been hurt to the core.

My relatives all opposed me, I waded through my mother's opposition. I reached the place where it was this way or Kalamazoo. I was living in Michigan at this time. You take this privilege from me and you make me an infidel.

I find those in the work who say it is simply an impression. I believe this impression is a call of God. But there is a difference between that and the 'woe to me if I preach the gospel.'

Do not wreck the church. Do not ruin it. Keep the spirit of the Master. Suffer long and be kind. The Lord help us. I am not a candidate for ordination. I have not brought up on the studies. One argument our opponents bring up is that the women do not want ordination. The same arguments were offered against the abolition of slavery. It was said to Abraham Lincoln regarding the emancipation of the colored people, 'They do not desire to be emancipated.' There 'masses' are better to them than anyone else would be. God bless our dear 'massas.' I do not want them as sure as I live.

When I was in Michigan I visited a place where there were none of our people within twenty miles. I was a preacher at that time in this church. There were no Free Methodists there, and when I came they said we are so glad you have come into this community. We have some children that we want baptized, and there is not a minister anywhere near us. Well, I do not know what I did say to them, but I excused it off the best I could, for I had always declared that our church was a free church, and I just supposed that they thought it was either lazy or indifferent in the matter.

Another argument that is brought against the ordination of woman is that the woman is not capable of enduring. I had always been slender and weakly, and was at one time a total invalid. I was given up to die a number of times, but since I have been in the work of the Lord I have come to use this expression, 'I can stand as much as an iron woman.' I think the nearest we will ever get to heaven is in the home. It man is the head of the woman in every sense of the word, what then is the situation of the widow?

Hanmer: I wish to speak to the practical side of this question. I want to be right. I want to do right, and I want to take a right position on all questions that pertain to the interest of the church of Christ. I want to act in harmony with God and the Bible and the dictates of common sense. When I do that I feel safe and good. I said to a brother a year or so ago, what do you think the principal difficulty is with us a people? He waited a moment and said, 'the

universal disregard for the dictates of common sense.' I respect the judgment of our senior superintendent (*B.T. Roberts who had passed away prior to this conference*). I confess that I am quite a little influenced by his opinions on the question before us. 'He being dead yet speaketh.' I believe it was a matter of deep conviction with him, and in addition to that I respect his knowledge and learning in the matter. I am in favor of ordaining women. First, let me say, we do not propose to ordain all who profess to be called to preach. Some are used as local preachers; but where we have women who are called of God to preach and give good evidence of a divine calling, are duly qualified and are acceptable and successful. I say, as a matter of fairness and justice, we ought to endorse them. Where they are free to go out upon circuits and travel, and are appointed by the annual conference year after year it is inconsistent for us to withhold from them this endorsement. That is the way it looks to me. I do not attach as much significance and importance to the question of ordination as some do. I believe the great significance and importance is found in the call to preach. You say that when a motion prevails to lay on the table, it carries with it all that relates to it. I believe that when God calls man or woman to preach, that call carries with it all the privileges that pertain to the office or the ministry. It seems to me we should endorse them. IN the matter of baptism, I do not place any importance or significance on that question. We baptize all that profess to be regenerated and we baptize them because they are regenerated. So in reference to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, we give members of Christ's church the sacrament because they are members. The great fact lying back of it, is the fact of redemption. I think we should in this same sense, endorse this with our call to preach. IN a sense I think it is an endorsement and we should give them our recognition when they give evidence of being called to preach. It seems to me, the great God had on his mind at the time when he gave the book of Revelations, two great principles: first, the condition of the church in all ages. Second, the condition of the world in the age when Revelation was given. You give some part of Revelation in specific form in the way of direct communication, then you give other truth embodied in principle that they at the time did see or understand. So you will find a great part of the Bible as embodied in principle on account of the darkness and superstitions of the ages. They were not ready to receive it; Jesus said, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' We do not give them the whole body of truth to start with. We give them the truth they are prepared to receive. I think God has acted on the same principle, and now we are living in a clearer and fuller light of the gospel dispensation. The light is on us now as never before. In reference to the matter of polygamy. Some of the old prophets were polygamists. They did not see that it was wrong, yet we can see the principle was embodied in the Bible then. It was so in reference to the matter of slavery; also in reference to the matter of the liquor question. The saloon keepers and brewers will go to the Bible for their authority. It is so in reference to the question of woman's advancement. She is coming to the front in professional life, in the legal profession, in the medical profession and in journalism. She is recognized all around and we had better give her recognition too.

(The ordination speeches are not published in the order in which they were delivered because some were published from manuscript furnished and others have to be transcribed from reporter's notes. -Terrill)

Thursday, Oct. 18, 1984 General Conference Dailies -Ordination Speeches Continued

Hart (General Superintendent): Brother Hanmer has spoken to the practical view of this question. I want to speak briefly to the scriptural view of it. 'To the law and the testimony. If any man speak not according to this word it is because there is no life in him.' I do not believe in such advancement in any age as precludes the necessity of holding closely to the word of God. I hear a great deal said about emancipation: about giving women liberty. I come to inquire what is liberty? It is not lawlessness; it is not absence of law. Liberty is obedience rendered to a just and righteous law. Where shall I go for that law? I appeal to the will of God as revealed in his word. It is not a question of the advancement of the age, what women may be able to do in any of the professions. Some say 'give us the chapter and verse.' If we are not able to do that (and they certainly are not able to give chapter and verse as authority for ordaining woman) what shall we do? We claim to take the whole scriptures, the word of God as the only and all-sufficient rule both for our faith and practice. Consequently we must inquire as to the general trend of the teaching of the word of God. I want to call your attention to a few passages in the Bible with reference to man's duty and woman's duty and work. The case of Deborah has been brought up here, and I have heard it in almost every discussion for years. To my mind it appears that God sent her to Barak to tell him to go to the battle, but as he was fearful he refused to go into the canoe unless Deborah should step in with him. And she tell him she will go if he is afraid to go alone, but she says it will not be to your honor. 'You had better go alone, Barak. No I cannot go unless Deborah goes along? So she went along with him. He went to battle tied by the hand of woman?' Turn, if you please to the 11th chapter of Hebrews, where the Holy Ghost gives us light on that transaction, and Deborah is not mentioned at all, but it is Barak who is mentioned there. That is how the Spirit seems to view the matter. But over there in Joel we read a prophesy, and 'it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants, and the handmaids will I pour out my Spirit.' Now I turn to the second chapter of Acts, and I find Peter on the day of Pentecost, as the baptism cam on them there, declaring that this prophecy was then and there fulfilled. Quoting from Joel, and you see he says, 'and it shall come to pass, saith God,' etc. The women were there with the hundred and twenty, and it came on all of them men and women. That was a general baptism. But now I want to know more clearly with reference to the special work of man and woman with reference to the matter of ordination, and find there are three things that women are spoken of as doing. They are spoken of as praying, prophesying, guiding their house and attending to their domestic duties, and perhaps, as laborers in Philippians. They are mentioned as having labored with the Apostle Paul. I do not find anything more than that. I find there is reference made to the ordination of men, and instruction given them as ordained men.

Paul had no wife, and his reference to deacons as being the husbands of one wife means simply this: if he is a married man he shall have but one wife; and it certainly means that the deacon is a man. Here in the twenty-first chapter of Acts of the Apostles we read in the eighth verse, 'And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed and came into Cesarea; and we entered into the house of Philip, the evangelist, which was one of the seven, and abode with him.' Philip was an evangelist. He had four daughters. What did they do? Where they evangelists? Were they deaconesses? 'And the same had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.'

Then I turn over to I Cor. 11: and I read instructions given to man and woman, 'every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head,' etc.

That is rather an obscure passage, but in the margin you will find a note which explains this, 'that is, a covering, in sign that she is under the power of her husband.' Here is instruction given how a woman shall be attired. When praying or prophesying her long hair is given to her for a covering.

What is it to prophesy? Under the Old Testament dispensation it meant to foretell, under the Spirit of God, future events – coming events; but under the New Testament dispensation it means the baptism of the spirit, a special outpouring of the spirit upon the person, and under the influence of that spirit the person gets up and speaks. And I believe that is just the work our sisters have been doing and should do.

We are told over here in Timothy what a woman should do with reference to her household duties. We turn to read Titus: 'To be discreet, chaste, and keepers of the home, good, obedient to their own husbands that the word of God be not blasphemed.' I find just these instructions given to the woman, and not a word about their being ordained. But you say, 'Brother Hart, we allow them to preach, and now to consistent, we must go on and ordain them.' I protest against that kind of logic which teaches that in a journey I have gone fifty miles out of the way, to be consistent I must go fifty mile more out of the way and thus get one hundred miles out of the way. I say it is more consistent to stop right where I am. If any person can give anything from the word of God touching the ordination of women I would be glad to hear it.

I do not care about the eloquence or sympathy of all these. I must stand by the word of God, for it is my only guide. I stick to the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them, and I do not ask any person to put their finger on chapter and verse, but I ask some one to tell me from the general tenor and tread of scripture teaching, if there is anything that gives credence or authority to the ordination of women.

Brooke (Illinois): Mr. President: This general conference is confronted with one of the most important questions that has agitated the church for years.

Shall any woman who is an acknowledged, successful, licensed minister of the gospel be admitted to the orders of deacon and elder in the church?

This question is before us, and it is here to remain until settled rightly. Neither ridicule nor sophistical reasoning can permanently bury it. The recent remark of one of the presidents of this conference was very significant. He said 'I do not know what can be done to permanently dispose of this question. I wish someone would tell me.' There is but one way to do it. Settle it in harmony with truth and justice, and it will remain settled, otherwise let us not deceive ourselves by thinking that any action of this body will restore peace to the church touching this subject.

What I shall say must not be construed to apply to the motives of any of my opponents. I believe them to be sincere in their intentions, but grossly in errors in their position on the subject.

I will notice a few important features of the question. The right to ordination is determined by the church upon the call and qualification of the candidate to ministry. If a man fails to abide by these tests, then let him be rejected upon this ground, and no other. Now if a man meets every requirement of the Discipline necessary to ordination and is

admitted; then a woman who meets every requirement of the Discipline necessary to ordination should be admitted, or else she should be denied the office of the ministry.

A call to the ministry, fully acknowledged by the church has always implied the right to ordination. Take the Free Methodist Discipline and read all the instructions and questions to the candidate for ordination, and you will not find a syllable or sentence about administering the sacraments or ruling in the church.

New Testament ordination was an act of the church by which a person was set apart to the office of the ministry. We do now, in part, practically admit and practice as a church, the ordination of woman from a New Testament point of view, but not from the standpoint of Free Methodist church polity. Hence it becomes a question of church polity and not one of Bible doctrine. Mr. Schaff, in his *Apostolic Church*, says, 'The ministerial office, was instituted by the Lord.' It appears in the New Testament under different names. Pay attention to this: 'It includes the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacrament and church discipline. The internal call and the moral qualifications for it must come from the Holy Ghost, but be recognized and ratified by the church, through her proper organs. The persons thus inwardly and outwardly designated by the church, were solemnly set apart and inducted into their ministerial functions by the symbolical act of ordination.'

Now we, as a church, admit woman's internal call and qualification for the ministry, and this is recognized and ratified by our church in licensing her to preach, yet we refuse to induct her into her ministerial functions by the symbolic act of ordination. There is no one who will deny that the right to administer the sacraments is derived from the person's call to preach, but deny her this right which we admit is hers by virtue of her call to the ministry. Nay, as Free Methodists, we go further. Our present polity gives no man the power to vote whether men shall be ordained or not, and then refuses her the right to that order which she has the power to decide for others. To me, it seems my brethren can not but see that this is the extreme of inconsistency. We can not be consistent and not either deny the whole or admit the whole. No principle will admit of a division.

But we are told that women can preach just as well, do as good work and see as many souls saved without ordination as with it. Admitting it, I ask can not man also? Then let us do away with ordination altogether. If it is essential for man as a minister to be ordained, why not just as essential for woman? We will be told by one able member of this body that woman should be ordained by not made a member of the annual or general conferences. I answer, women now are members of those bodies and why should ordination exclude them from the rights they now possess? It appears indeed strange that our women whom we have licensed to preach for years and who have acceptably filled every office and position in the church entrusted to them, that they must now be fenced in by special laws to keep them from getting out of their place.

That the general conference must vaccinate the church by restrictive laws to keep her from catching the awful plague of woman ordination. What is there in the history of woman in her official relation to the church or as a minister of the gospel that we should be so frightened by imaginary evils which are too transparent to cast a shadow? But we are told that woman should not rule over man, but should be in subjection to her husband. We admit this applies to the family but not to the church. The church is democratic in her government, the family is not. It is right, and in all properly governed homes the word of the husband and father is the end of all controversy. But with our present church polity the

woman of our church rule the church. They elect every officer and can reverse any decision and make any law which they may desire. We are under woman rule in the fullest sense of the word. It takes neither sense nor grace to pooh at these cold facts. It is much easier and more convenient to either doge or ridicule than to reason when faced by these arguments. But those who are unprejudiced will demand that our opponents give their reasons for admitting women to the office of ministry by license and then deny her the inseparable rights to the office to which they have admitted her, and no amount of semi-jokes or funny speeches will meet this demand.

Again there will undoubtedly be an attempt to force this conference to believe that it is a transgression of divine order to ordain women. We have been treated to this: even to the measuring of her hips and shoulders and the texture of the masculine bones which simply prove that woman was designed for the duties of maternity, but does not prove that she was not designed for the ministry. If it does, then the coarse composition of man's physical nature with his broad shoulders and bearded face fully shows that he was designed to fight thorns and thistles, and the majority of the ministers of this body should go home and get to the work for which they were designed.

But how do we determine what divine order really is? By deciding on the adaptability of the agent used, to the work to be preformed and the accomplishment of the end to be attained. And not by the divine operation s in the past, as we have been told. There came the time when God proposed to do away with the sacrificial blood of beasts and the symbolical ceremonies of the temple and it costs the disciples their lives to establish this new order.

When the Scotch reformed had broken away from the old ritualistic form of worship of the established church and one of the old type of ministers attempted to force the ritual on an assembly of dissenters a Scotch lass arose and hurled her stool at the preacher's head, and he concluded that the established order should be changed in that meeting at least.

God always doe the best he can under the circumstances then existing. He did in this. It is clear to any candid mind that the heathen prejudice existing against woman in the day sof Christ, and the nature of the work of a disciple in the infant days of unorganized Christianity, made it inexpedient for a woman to be chosen as one of the twelve. But to conclude that as Jesus did not select a woman, therefore no woman in any age of the church should be ordained in the ministry, is all but ridiculous. God has plainly declared, 'Behold I wilt do a new thing.' And it is the carrying out of this divine determination in the church that has caused much of her troubles.

What is the conclusion? First, y successful efforts of woman she has proven herself adapted to the word of the ministry by accomplishing the work from which God intended the ministry should do. Second, she has forced her most bitter opposers to admit it and put their sanction upon her work, and license her to it. Third, man now on this general conference floor seeks to put asunder what God had joined together. His commission to those whom he sent. (and it must apply to all whom the church sends in his name), was 'Go yet into all the world and teach all nations.' We say to our sister ministers you may do this. But here he says 'baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.' We arise and cry with vehement voices, never, NEVER. Let her heathen converts go back to heathendom unbaptized rather than to have the fingers of a feminine minister touch the water in the baptismal bowl. That side, Mr. President, I claim we have no right to do; to do

it, is a shame a reproach upon us as a Christian denomination. With our present position we cannot be consistent and refuse woman the right of ordination. I openly challenge anyone to produce one argument against woman ordination that will not apply with equal force to the woman as a gospel preacher.

Brethren of the conference, you will perceive by the arguments of our opponents that nearly all their objections will be indirectly aimed against women in the pulpit. Watch for this point. We will undoubtedly hear of the bashful stationing committee, woman's maternal duties, and how awful it would for a little woman to baptize a big man. Of course if woman is ordained all of big brethren will be compelled to seek some little woman to baptize them. But listen to a few lines in rhyme which will answer nine-tenths of the objection to the ordination of women:

Let folly fly her fairy kite
And light with its wings, dear,
But oh, lest it go out of sight
Bid reason hold the string dear,
Lest soaring away off in the heavens
With starry gems bespangled,
It might, by folly's zepthers drive,
In moonshine get entangled.

Again, with our present polity, a woman minister may labor for forty years beside her brother. The health of both may break under the weight and wear of ministerial burdens. The brother minister is superannuated with an income of \$150; the sister is turned out to do for herself or die as far as an allowance is concerned. I do not say that this should be the grounds of her admission to ordination. But ordination would correct this evil.

Again, one of the superintendents remarked recently, with a degree of satisfaction, that when other societies and organizations of reform reached the point of victory they would find us already there – we were there when they came. The United Brethren, the Wesleyans, the Free-will Baptists, and the Congregationalists have all reached the point of ordaining women, and we are not there. It will not do for any on this conference floor to say this is not a reform; hence we should be there.

Allow me, please, to give you a bit of history. At the Burlington general conference of the Free Methodist church the question of woman preaching was raised. Our senior superintendent took a reform side on the issue, and his unanswerable arguments won the day. One minister of the church rushed into the street he was so overcome with the fact that women were to be licensed preacher. He afterward found a home where the women do not preach. Four years later at Coopersville, Michigan, the issue was raised: 'Shall women be admitted to an official relation to the church and assist in governmental affairs?'

The same spirit of opposition to the rights of women was t here. Some with lofty eloquence cried, 'Why! We let her preach, and we gave her the rights to hold meetings; what more does she want?' But this spirit met its old antagonist as Ahab met Elijah, and he with others on the conference floor, buried it with words of burning logic, and woman was admitted to even the highest courts of the church, and another, with uplifted hands, left the conference and the church (*W. Gould 1886 General Conference*).

Now the question is one of consistency. We must go ahead or go back. Go back? Never. But here we find the same old spirit that was defeated at Burlington and buried at

Coopersville. Now it cries, 'We let woman preach and we let her in office, what more does she want?'

Her friends content for all her rights, and sooner or later all her rights she shall have. But let it be remembered that it was not through the clemency of her opposers that she gained the rights now possessed; but she, with her friends, fought her way in the teeth of the bitterest opposition and took the field by force. Now her dearest friend, her most able defender, lies in habiliments of death (*B.T. Roberts*), but be ye assured that 'he being dead, yet speaketh,' and that this battle will never cease until the minister of the gospel in the Free Methodist church, who meets the requirements of the Discipline, shall be ordained without distinction of sex.

The victory is not far off; when it is won our opponents, true to their reputation in the past will say, 'all this we have granted woman.'

I will quote a few words from the immortal Oliver Wendell Holmes. It exactly describes our situation on this question and our approaching day of victory:

'The times are racked with birth-pangs;
Every hour brings some grasping truth,
And truth new born looks a misshapen, untimely growth-
The terror of the household and its shame-
A monster, coiling in its nurse's lap.
That some would strangle, some would starve-
But lives, and passed from hand to hand,
And nursed at a hundred half-clad breasts,
Slowly comes to its stature and its form.
Calmly smoothes the rough edges of its dragon scales.
Changes into shining locks its snaky hair,
And moves transformed in angel's guide -
Welcomed by all who curse the hour of its birth,

And folded in the same encircling arms that cast it as a serpent from their hold. Let it be thoroughly understood that we are not her pleading for mercy. We are asking no special favors of the church. We are not begging for clemency. We ask for the rights of the Free Methodist church, that is faithfully doing its share of the work; for the rights of those women the church has admitted to the positions of toil and burden, denying her the only office and appropriations which belong to her. If she has no rights in ordination, then we ask her opponents to prove it, allowing her the office of the ministry which she now has. If they fail in this final effort as they have in the past, then sir, we stand as members of this general conference and demand her ordination as her rights. This body may grant or refuse it at their pleasure. We will not leave the church of our choice, as those opposing women have done, but assured the agitation will not cease till righteousness prevails, justice triumphs, and woman is ordained to ministry in the Free Methodist church.

General Conference Vote on Ordination: 35 for, against 65 – *Terrill, Oct. 16, 1894 General Conference Daily*