

Epistle 320 - Part 2

by George Fox

Women have played important roles in the Bible as preachers, messengers, helpers, and labourers in the gospel, and their faithfulness and contributions to the church are examples for all believers.

Scripture: Matthew 15:22-28, Mark 5:25-34, Mark 16:6, Luke 1:38-56, Luke 2:7, Luke 2:19, John 20:12-18, Romans 16:1, Galatians 3:28

Topics: "Faith and Action", "Women in Ministry"

Description

George Fox emphasizes the significant roles of women in the early Christian church, highlighting their faith and actions as examples for all believers. He discusses Mary, the mother of Jesus, and her acceptance of God's word, as well as the faith of women like Elizabeth, Anna, and the Canaanite woman, who all played crucial roles in proclaiming Christ. Fox points out that women were not only witnesses to Jesus' life and resurrection but also active participants in spreading the gospel, challenging the notion that women should be silent in the church. He encourages women to embrace their calling and serve God with their gifts, as seen in the examples of Dorcas and Lydia. Ultimately, Fox calls for recognition of women's contributions to the faith and their equal standing in Christ.

Transcript

And in Luke i. you may see, how the angel of the Lord appeared unto Mary the mother of Jesus, and what he said to her, and what a noble virtuous mind was in her; and she said unto the angel, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word [Luke 1:38];' so her belief was beyond Zachariah's the priest.

And when Mary came unto Elizabeth, what a meeting and salutation was there; and how she was filled with the holy ghost, and the babe leaped in her womb, and she praised the Lord God, and called her the mother of the Lord [Luke 1:39-56]. Read from the 40th to the 57th verse, and see how she extols the Lord, and magnifies Christ Jesus; for here was a heavenly meeting of these two, which is chronicled to ages.

So you may see her belief was above Zachariah's the priest. So Mary and Elizabeth were notable preachers of Christ Jesus.

And you may see in Luke ii. 7. how Mary wrapped Christ in swaddling-clothes [Luke 2:7], and how tender she was of the heavenly birth, conceived by the holy ghost. And so must all true and tender christians, that receive him in the spirit: and how she kept all the sayings that were spoken of Christ, and pondered them

in her heart [Luke 2:19]. Verse 19. And so should every true christian.

And there was Anna a prophetess, which was eighty-four years old, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayer night and day, 'and she gave thanks unto the Lord, and spoke of Christ unto all that looked for redemption in Israel [Luke 2:36-38]'; she spoke of Christ. Here was a notable old woman of eighty-four years of age, a preacher and declarer of Christ.

And you do not read that ever any despised her, or said, it was forbidden for a woman to speak in the church.

But this woman is set forth for an example to all young and old women, of her love to Christ her saviour; and not only so, but a preacher of him to all that looked for redemption in Israel.

And the woman of Canaan that came unto Jesus, and said, 'Lord, help,' but he answered and said, 'it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto dogs;' and she said, 'truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the master's table.' Then Jesus answered and said unto her, 'O woman! great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt [Mat 15:22-28].'

So you may see, by this woman's faith in Christ Jesus, this woman's daughter was made whole, which was an example for all the faithful to look unto Jesus for help, as you may see in Matt. xv.

And Mary, that took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment. But when Judas saw it, he had indignation, saying, 'What profit is this waste? Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pieces of silver, and given to the poor [John 12:3-6], as you may see in Matt. xxvi. and Mark xiv. and John xii. Now this was Judas, who carried the bag [John 12:6, 13:29], and betrayed Christ; and many there are that carry the bag now, that would not have their wives nor the women bestow any thing upon Christ, nor his poor followers.

But Jesus said, 'Let her alone, why trouble you her? She hath wrought a good work on me; for the poor ye have with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good, but me ye have not always; she hath done what she could; she is come beforehand to anoint my body to my burial. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her. [Mat 26:1-13]'

So Christ did not forbid the woman's practice, but encouraged her, and so he doth still them that obey him.

And the woman that was twelve years troubled with an issue of blood, who had spent all upon physicians, and grew worse and worse; her faith was so strong, that she believed, if she could but touch the hem of his garment, she should be well.

And as soon as she had touched his clothes, virtue went from Christ and healed her; and then the woman came fearing and trembling, and fell down before Christ, and told him all the truth, what she had done; and he said unto her, 'Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace [Mark 5:25-34].' Mark v.

Now Christ, who is the head of the church, here suffered a woman to speak before him, from whom she had received the healing virtue.

And you may see when Christ was crucified, how many women were there, as Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and many others which came up to Jerusalem, that were about Jesus at the time of his being crucified [Mark 15:40f], as in Mark xv.

And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, came to the sepulchre, and the angel said unto them, 'Be not afraid: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is not here, he is arisen: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall you see him, as he said unto you [Mark 16:6f].' For Jesus appeared first, viz. to Mary Magdalene [Mark 16:9], as in Mark xvi.

And in John xx. it is said, the two angels said to Mary, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' And she said, 'Because they have taken away my lord, and I know not where they have laid him;' and when she had thus said, she turned herself, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus, &c. But Jesus said unto her, 'Mary,' and she turned herself, and said unto him, 'Rabbi,' (as much as to say, master,) and Jesus said unto her, 'Touch me not; for I am not ascended yet unto my Father; but go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God,' &c. And Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples, that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. [John 20:12-18]

So here Mary Magdalene was a messenger of Christ Jesus, who did not despise her speaking before him, who was the head of the church, nor did not refuse to send her to preach his resurrection to his disciples, though she was a woman.

And in Luke xxiv. it is said, it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women who were with them, who told the apostles, that Christ was risen [Luke 24:10]; and this was said unto them, 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen. Remember that he spoke unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, the son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men [Luke 24:5-7],' &c.

And they remembered these words, and they returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven disciples, and all the rest [Luke 24:8f].

And mark, as I said before, it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles; and these words seemed unto them as idle tales, and they believed them not Luke 24:11].

Now mark their message, and to whom it was, and who they were that were the messengers, the weaker vessels, and to whom, to the apostles; and what they preached was, what they remembered Christ had spoken to them before, to wit, that Christ should suffer, and rise again.

And Christ appeared again unto two of his disciples, and he talked with them, and asked them, 'What communication they had?' And they said unto him, 'Art thou a stranger in Jerusalem, and knowest not the things that have befallen,' &c. And he said unto them, 'What things?' And they said unto him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, that was a great prophet, and mighty in deed and in word, before God and all people, which the Jews have crucified; but they trusted he should have redeemed Israel; and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. And certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at his sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had seen a vision of angels, which said, he was alive [Luke 24:17-23].'

So here the woman's testimony of the resurrection of Christ astonished them.

And Jesus said unto them, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? [Luke 24:25f]' &c.

Now here you may see it was Mary, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the other women that were with them, that declared the resurrection of Christ unto the eleven, which seemed but as idle tales to the apostles [Mat 28:5-7].

And here was a joyful women's meeting indeed, of messengers and preachers of Christ's resurrection, which is recorded to posterity to their renown, that all should believe; though their message and speech were as idle tales to the disciples; but they were owned by Christ the head of the church, as aforesaid, though their preaching was slighted by the apostles, and counted as idle tales; but they came to believe afterwards, as in Luke xxiv.

And the woman of Samaria, that Christ Jesus convinced, and taught her how God was to be worshipped, to wit, in the spirit and truth; you may see what a large discourse Christ had with her [John 4:7-26], as in John iv. from the 7th to the 27th, and suffered her to speak before the head of the church.

And Christ's disciples marvelled that he talked with a woman [John 4:27]; and the woman left her pitcher of water, and went away into a city of Samaria, and said unto the men of the city, (mark, unto the men,) 'Come and see a man that told me all that ever I did, is not this the Christ?' [John 4:28f] And many of the Samaritans believed because of the saying of the woman, which testified, 'He told me all that ever I did [John 4:39].' And when they heard Christ, they said unto the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of thy saying only, but we have heard him ourselves, and know that he is indeed the Christ, the saviour of the world [John 4:42].'

So here you may see, there was a woman preacher, that Christ (the head of the church) suffered; and through her means many were converted unto Christ.

And when they had crucified Jesus Christ, there were many women that beheld him afar off, which followed him from Galilee, ministering unto him, amongst which were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Joses the mother of Zebedee's children [Mat 27:56].

And here you may see, there was a women's meeting with Christ, in his sufferings, which, when he was risen, some of them preached his resurrection, as you may see in Matt. xxvii. 61. and chap. xxviii. 5, 6, 7. where you may read the message Christ gave to the women, to declare to the apostles, as aforesaid, which is recorded and set forth, that others might believe their message [Mat 28:5-9] .

And when Christ spoke in reproof to the Jews, he said, 'I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elisha, &c. but to none of them was Elisha sent, save to Zarephath, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow,' &c [Luke 4:25f, 1 Ki 7:9-16] . And the Jews arose up, and thrust Christ out of their city, being filled with wrath against him, for this saying, and his reproving of them [Luke 4:28f].

And you may read at large the acts, doings, and sayings of this faithful woman, in 1 Kings xvii. 9. and Luke iv.

And in Luke vii. Christ turned him to the woman, and said unto Simon, 'Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, but thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and

wiped them with the hair of her head. And thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came into the house, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loved little.'

And they that sat at meat with him began to say, 'Who is this forgiveth sins?' and he said unto the woman, 'Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.' [Luke 7:44-50]

So here you may see how Christ justified the woman's actions above Simon, whose faith saved her; which is chronicled to her renown, and the honour of God. And in Matt. xxviii. there you may see this Mary Magdalene, who was a preacher of Christ, it was she, out of whom Christ had cast out seven devils; and with her Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and Susanna, who ministered unto Christ of their substance [Luke 8:2f].

Now, would not some niggards be ready to say, these women picked their husbands' pockets; and others, with Judas, who carry the bag [John 12:6], may say, we must have but one purse [Prov 1:14?], and is not our gift and benevolence sufficient? as in Matt. xxviii. Luke xxiv.

But this woman loved Christ; and Christ said, 'My mother and my brethren are these, which hear the word of God and do it [Luke 8:21].' Luke viii. 21.

'And Martha received Christ into her house, and she had a sister called Mary, that sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his words; but Martha was cumbered about much serving;' and Jesus said unto her, 'Martha, thou art caring and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good thing, which shall not be taken away from her [Luke 10:38-42].' Which is the duty of every good man and woman to do, if they will be kept out of the many things. And you may see how Mary talked with Christ, and Christ with her.

So this is chronicled, that all might choose the good part, and the one thing, which cannot be taken away from them; and to be kept out of the many things that cumber, as you may see in Luke x.

And doth not Christ say, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till all the lump is leavened [Mat 13:33]?' So, must not every man and woman know this leaven in their hearts, if they will know the kingdom of Christ? Luke xiii.

And the parable of Christ, concerning the woman that lost her piece of silver, who lighted a candle and swept her own house, and found it in her own house; and when she had found it, she rejoiced, and told her neighbours [Luke 15:8f]. And must not every woman light her own candle at the light of Christ Jesus, and sweep her own house with the power of God, before she finds God's treasure? And then for joy that they have found it, go and declare it unto their friends and neighbours? And do not all those women that have found this, preach Christ to their friends and neighbours, and call them together? For may they not be suffered after they have lost an outward treasure, and found it again, to call their neighbours together to rejoice with them, which they may find by lighting an outward candle? But their spirits being the candle of the Lord [Prov 20:27], this must be lighted at the heavenly light and fire, by which their everlasting treasure is found; and must not they say then to their neighbours and friends, rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which was lost? 'Likewise, I say unto you,' saith Christ, 'there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth [Luke 15:10];' as you may see in Luke xv.

Now, here you may see all these renowned, faithful women, were encouraged by Christ and his followers; and are recorded and set forth to encourage all that are faithful to wait upon Christ, and to light their candle at God's light and fire, that so they may sweep their house and find their treasure, that they may declare their joy of it to their friends and neighbours.

And also you may see Dorcas was full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did: 'and all the widows stood by Peter weeping, showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, whilst she was with them [Acts 9:36-41],' (to wit, the widows:) mark, and was not there a women's meeting then? whilst Dorcas was with them; to wit, the widows; and Dorcas was a disciple of Jesus. Acts ix.

And Paul on the sabbath went out of the city by a river side, where prayers were wont to be made, and spoke to the women who resorted thither [Acts 16:13]; and was not there a women's meeting also, who resorted there to pray together?

And there was a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things spoken by Paul, and she besought him to come to her house, if he judged her faithful to the Lord, and abide there, and she constrained him and them that were with him [Acts 16:14f]. Acts xvi. So you may see the faithfulness of this woman, and the practice of the other women before they were converted.

And Priscilla, who was a notable faithful woman, whom Paul often mentions with her husband Aquilla [Acts 18]; and Philip's four daughters, who were prophetesses [Acts 21:8f], who were set forth to encourage others. And you may see Phebe, whom the apostle Paul sends his epistles to the Romans from Corinth by, and calls a servant of the church of Cenchrea; and he saith, 'Greet Mary, which bestowed much labour upon us [Rom 16:6]; and Priscilla and Aquilla, my fellow-labourers in Christ Jesus.'

So here you may see there were women labourers and helpers in the gospel. And he farther saith, 'I commend unto you our sister Phebe, who is a servant unto the church [Rom 16:1],' &c. And saith, 'Priscilla and Aquilla, my fellow-helpers in Christ Jesus, which for my life have laid down their necks, unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles [Rom 16:3f].'

So here you may see in what esteem were this man and woman, and Phebe, and other women, for their faithfulness to the churches; as you may read, Rom. xvi.

And the apostle saith, that 'the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife,' &c. 'else their children were unholy;' but now they are clean; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband [1 Cor 7:14]:' so here is an equal share in the belief. 1 Cor. vii. And the apostle saith, that 'every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head [1 Cor 11:5].'

So women may pray and prophesy here, according to order, in the church, as well as the men. 1 Cor. xi. And yet the same apostle in the 14th chapter, forbids a woman to speak in the church.

And the apostle saith, 'Let the women keep silence in the church;' and 'if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home [1 Cor 14:34f].'

But when they have learnt of Christ their husband at home, they are not forbidden of Christ from prophesying or praying; but to lie babbling and prating in the church, such speaking in the church is a shame.

Now a widow hath no husband to ask but Christ; nor a virgin, yet she may prophesy; and a believing woman, that hath an unbelieving husband, he is to be sanctified by her: so she is not to learn her salvation of him, but of Christ, and to do his work.

And the same apostle saith, 'Let the men keep silence in the church, if they speak an unknown tongue, and there be not an interpreter [1 Cor 14:27f].'

So, here the men must keep silence in the church in this case, as well as the women. 1 Cor. xi. and chap. xiv. 27.

And the apostle further saith, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the church, but to be under obedience;' as also saith the law [1 Cor 14:34].

But though the law did not permit their usurping authority in the church, yet it did permit their prophesying in the church, in the time of the law, as well as in the time of the gospel; as you may see by those famous women before mentioned, in the Old Testament, as well as in the New.

And the same apostle saith, 'I beseech thee, Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, that they may be of the same mind in the Lord; and I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel; with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life [Phil 4:2f].'

So here the apostle entreated his yokefellow to help those women who laboured with him in the gospel, the power of God: so these women were meet-helpers with the apostle in the labour of the gospel, (the power of God,) as you may see in Phil. iv. And all that be of his mind in the Lord, will encourage either women or widows, or virgins, that have received the gospel, to labour in it; and all that have not the mind of the apostle in the Lord, will discourage women's labouring in the gospel, and not entreat others to help them; but such will give them liberty to labour in the power of darkness [Col 1:13], and to slothfulness, and carelessness; which the wo is unto [Isa 32:10f], and not the blessing.

And again, the apostle writes to Timothy, 'that the women should adorn themselves in modest apparel, and shamefacedness, and sobriety, not with brodered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but which becomes women professing godliness, with good works; and let your women learn in silence with all subjection, &c. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man; but learn in silence, &c. For the woman being deceived, was first in transgression [1 Tim 2:9-12],' &c.

Now for a woman to preach or teach, such a teaching as Eve taught Adam, such a sermon as she had from the serpent, that drew herself, and Adam her husband, from God's teaching [Gen 3:6]; here, in this teaching, she usurped authority over the man; and therefore God set the man to rule over the woman [Gen 3:16]; but they were meet-helpers before [Gen 2:18], while they were under God's teaching.

Now, to usurp authority over the man by such teaching, is out of the unity; which teaching is forbidden both by law and gospel; and they are not fit to teach, if they have not learned subjection to the spirit of God, and know the silence of all flesh before the Lord [Zech 2:13], and have not learned to adorn themselves with that which is modest, and the lesson of sobriety, which becomes godliness; and with the good works, the fruits of the spirit [Gal 5:22].

And such women as have learned this lesson may teach and prophesy; for the spirit is poured upon them to that end.

And the same apostle saith, 1 Tim. v. 'that the elder women should be as mothers;' and a mother is a nurser, and a teacher, and instructor of her children; 'and the younger women as sisters, with all purity [1 Tim 5:2];' and sisters in Christ and in purity, all have but one father; and a sister is in the unity, in the spirit, in the gospel. 1 Tim. v. 'And if any woman that believes have widows, let them relieve them [1 Tim 5:16].' So here was the woman's work, to relieve their widows, &c.

And again, the apostle writes to Titus, and saith unto him, 'Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine, &c. The aged women, that they be of good behaviour, as becometh holiness; not false accusers, not given to much wine; teachers of good things'[Tit 2:3].

Now here they must be qualified before they can be teachers of those good things.

And that these aged women teach the younger women; first, to be sober; secondly, to love their husbands; thirdly, to love their children; fourthly, to be discreet; fifthly, to be chaste, and keepers at home, and good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed [Tit 2:4f].

Now here the aged women, not a woman, but the aged women, were to teach the younger women these things.

And how could these women be teachers of all these virtues and good things, if these mothers and holy women did not meet together, and converse together of holiness and virtue; as in Tit. ii.

And in 1 Pet. iii. he encourageth wives and women, that if their husbands will not be won by the word, they may without the word be won by the chaste conversation of the wives; 'whilst they behold your chaste conversation,' saith he, 'coupled with fear; and whose adorning,' saith he, 'let it not be that of the outward, with plaiting of the hair, or wearing of gold, or putting on costly apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price [1 Pet 3:1-4].'

And this, he saith, was the ornament of the holy women in the old time, with which they adorned themselves, who trusted in God, as Sarah, &c. 'whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement [1 Pet 3:6].'

And likewise the believing husband, and the believing wife, are heirs together of the grace and life [1 Pet 3:7].

And therefore the believing women being heirs of grace and life, as well as the men, they may impart of their life, which they do inherit, as well as men; for an heir of life is beyond an heir of the earth.

And there is no believing husband will hinder his believing wife, being heirs of life, to administer some of their temporal things to them that are in necessity; he will not have all the earth to himself, but let her have the disposing of some of it, as well as himself, whilst they do enjoy it; and ministering of outward things is the least love. And women many times know the condition of poor families, and widows, and such as are in distress, more than the men, because they are most conversant in their families, and about such things.

But there are many idle talkers, and busy bodies [1 Tim 5:13], that are out of the sense and service of God, that will not do good themselves, nor suffer others to do their service of love and charity for the Lord in the church.

And John writes in his second Epistle unto the elect lady and her children, 'whom I love in the truth,' saith he, 'and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth, for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever [2 Jn 1:1f], &c. I rejoice greatly,' says he, 'that I have found thy children walking in the truth [2 Jn 1:4].' And further saith, 'I write no new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another [2 Jn 1:5].'

And so he trusts to come and see her, and speak face to face unto her [2 Jn 1:12]; 'the children of thy elect sister greet thee [2 Jn 1:13].' Amen.

So was not this an honourable woman, that had trained up her children in the truth, as was commanded by John? And he admonished her against such as did transgress, and did not abide in the doctrine of Christ Jesus, that they had not the Father nor the son; but they that did abide in the doctrine of Christ Jesus, had both the Father and the son [2 Jn 1:9].

So is not this an encouragement to all faithful women, to see that their children do walk in the truth, and abide in the doctrine of Christ, that they may have both the Father and the son?

And farther Solomon saith, 'A gracious woman attains honour [Prov 11:16], and a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband [Prov 12:4], and every wise woman buildeth her own house.' Surely then she hath a work to do. He that hath ears let him hear. 'But the foolish woman plucketh it down with her hands [Prov 14:1].' And there are too many of those that are in the transgression of the spirit and power of God, with which they must build. 'But a woman that feareth God, she shall be praised; give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates [Prov 31:30f].' And then surely she hath a work to do, that must praise her in the gates.

'She stretcheth forth her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy [Prov 31:20].' Prov. xxxi. And must she not then have something of the outward to do it withal?

'She opens her mouth in wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looks well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness [Prov 31:26f]. She is like the merchant's ship, she bringeth her food from far; she riseth also whilst it is night, and giveth meat to her household, and portions to her maidens; she considereth a field, and buyeth it with the fruit of her hands; she planteth a vineyard; she girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms; she perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night [Prov 31:14-18],' &c.

And here is an example to all women, a pattern of virtue, and of fruitfulness, and faithfulness, and valour, and practice in the Lord's work; and such their children will rise up, and call her blessed [Prov 31:28]. 'Many daughters have done virtuously, (says he,) but this woman excelleth them [Prov 31:29];' that is, the nurse of them.

And now friends, many of other examples in the scriptures might be showed, to encourage women's meetings in the service of God and Christ, both concerning their faithful testimony for the Lord and Christ, and their encouragement by the faithful in the old and new testament, how that they had their assemblies and their meetings. And now they being heirs of life, and of grace [1 Pet 3:7], and of the gospel of Christ, which hath brought life and immortality to light [2 Tim 1:10], you may see over him that has darkened you, and before he was.

Therefore this gospel, the power of God [Rom 1:16], which is the everlasting orderer, is to keep you in life and immortality, that you may be meet-helps in the power and image of God to the men [Gen 2:18], as man and woman were in before they fell.

So, to administer of the heavenly and temporal refreshments, to such as want it; and to stand up for your liberty in the light, and life, and grace, and glorious gospel, being heirs of life, and grace, and of the gospel of salvation, and of Christ Jesus, as well as the men.

So that all, males and females, are one in Christ Jesus [Gal 3:28], who is the first and last, and over all from everlasting to everlasting, your everlasting joy, peace, and happiness.

And if there was no scripture for our men and women's meetings, Christ is sufficient, who restores man and woman up into the image of God [Col 3:10], to be helps-meet in the righteousness and holiness [Eph 4:24], as they were in before they fell. So he is our rock and foundation to build upon [Mat 7:24].

'Wisdom hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the high places of the city, whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, come, eat of my bread, and drink of my wine, which I have mingled; forsake the foolish, and live, and grow in the way of understanding [Prov 9:3-6].'

Here you may see the wisdom of God sends forth maidens,* [* True ministers, who are chaste to Christ] though the wisdom of the world will not receive them, (that make ministers by their wisdom,) and such as will not receive wisdom, will not receive her maidens. Prov. ix. 1, 2, 3.

The Lord saith, 'I will pour out upon David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn, &c. In that day there shall be great mourning, the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart [Zech 12:10-14].' Zech. xii. 10.

And this would be madness to all them that are not in that spirit; but here every one hath the sense of Christ, whom they have pierced in the spirit, which is poured upon them, but the hard-hearted are not sensible.

G. F.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-fox/epistle-320-part-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net