

Chapter Title: Women in the Early Church

Book Title: Early Christians Speak

Book Subtitle: Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries

Book Author(s): Everett Ferguson

Published by: ACU Press. (1999)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1k3nq1f.23>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



This book is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>. Funding is provided by Andrew W. Mellon Foundation as part of the National Endowment of the Humanities Open Book program.



ACU Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Early Christians Speak*

XIX

Women in the Early Church

"Adorned with good works that are fitting for women who profess godliness"

Some New Testament Texts: Luke 8:1-3; Acts 2:17-18; 21:9; 9:36; 16:15, 40; 18:26; Romans 16:2, 12; 1 Corinthians 11:5; 14:33-40; Ephesians 5:21-33; Philippians 4:2-3; 1 Timothy 2:1-15; 5:1-16; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-6; Revelation 2:20-23.

SOURCES

CLEMENT OF ROME: You gave instructions to the wives to perform everything in a blameless and pure conscience and to be properly affectionate to their own husbands. You taught them to fulfill their household duties honorably and to live by the rule of submission, being altogether prudent. (1.3) XIX.1

POLYCARP: Teach your wives to walk in the faith given to them, in love, and in purity, to be altogether truly affectionate to their own husbands, to love all others equally in all chastity, and to bring up their children in the discipline of the fear of God. Teach the widows to be prudent in the faith of the Lord, to pray unceasingly for all, to be far from all slander, evil speaking, false witness, love of money, and every evil, and to recognize that they are an altar of God. (*Philippians* 4.2-3) 2

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: It is possible for man and woman equally to share in perfection. . . . 3

The wise woman then would first choose to persuade her husband to be a partner with her in the things that lead to true happiness. If that should be impossible, alone she should be diligent in virtue, being obedient to her husband so as to do nothing against his will except in regard to those things that are considered to make a difference to virtue and salvation. . . .

Marriage then that is fulfilled according to reason is sanctified, if the union is subjected to God The truly happy marriage must be judged

by neither wealth nor beauty but by virtue. (*Miscellanies* 4.19, 20)

- 4 TERTULLIAN: What a marriage is that between two believers! They have one hope, one desire, one way of life, the same religion. They are brother and sister, both fellow servants, not divided in flesh or in spirit — truly “two in one flesh,” for where there is one flesh there is also one spirit. They pray together; they prostrate themselves together; they carry out fasts together. They instruct one another and exhort one another. Side by side they are present in the church of God and at the banquet of God; they are side by side in difficulties and in consolations. Neither ever hides things from the other; neither avoids the other; neither is a grief to the other. Freely the sick are visited and the poor are sustained. Without anxiety, misgiving, or hindrance from the other, they give alms, attend the sacrifices [of the church], perform their daily duties [of piety]. They are not secretive about making the sign of the cross; they are not fearful in greetings; they are not silent in giving benedictions. They sing psalms and hymns one to the other; they challenge each other as to who better sings to God. When Christ sees and hears such things, he rejoices. (*To His Wife* 2.8)

- 5 JUSTIN: Many men and sixty- and seventy-year old women, who were disciples of Christ from childhood, remain (sexually) pure. And I vow to show such from every race of humanity.

We do not marry initially except for the bringing up of children, or if we renounce marriage, we live in complete chastity. (*Apology* I, 15; 29)

- 6 ATHENAGORAS: You would find among us many men and women who have lived to old age unmarried in the hope rather of living together with God. (*Plea for the Christians* 33)

- 7 ACTS OF PAUL AND THECLA: Thecla said to Paul, “I will cut my hair short and follow you wherever you go.” . . .

Thecla entered with [Tryphaena] and rested in her house for eight days, instructing her in the word of God, so that many of her maidservants believed; and there was great joy in the house.

Thecla said to Paul, “I am going to Iconium.” And Paul said, “Go and teach the word of God.” So Tryphaena sent with her much clothing and gold, so that she could leave it for the ministry of the poor. . . .

Having testified to these things [to Theokleia], she departed for Seleucia, and after enlightening many with the word of God she died with a good sleep. (25; 39; 41; 43)

- 8 MARTYRS OF LYONS: Blandina was filled with such power that those who took turns torturing her in every way from morning to evening became weary and tired. They acknowledged that they were defeated,

since they had nothing further that they could do to her. They marvelled that she was still breathing, for her entire body was broken and torn open, and they testified that one kind of torture was sufficient to take her life, without so many and such grievous tortures. Nevertheless, this blessed woman, like a noble athlete, gained renewed strength in her confession. Her recovery, refreshment, and insensibility to her sufferings came from saying, "I am a Christian, and among us there is nothing wicked." . . . XIX.

Blandina was hung on a stake and exposed as food for the wild beasts that were released. Her hanging in the form of a cross, by being seen and by her intense prayer, inspired great enthusiasm in her fellow combatants, for in the contest and with their own eyes they saw by means of their sister the One who was crucified for them, so that Christ might convince those who believe in him that all who suffer for Christ's glory will have everlasting fellowship with the living God. When none of the wild beasts touched her, she was taken down from the stake and brought back to the prison. . . .

The blessed Blandina was last of all. Like a noble mother encouraging her children, she sent them victorious before her to the King. Filling up the measure of all the struggles of her children, she hastened to them with rejoicing and gladness at her death, as if invited to a bridal banquet and not as thrown to the wild beasts. After the scourges, the wild beasts, the hot frying pan, at last she was thrown into a net and was exposed to a bull. After being much tossed about by the animal, she no longer had any feeling of what was happening, because she had hope, held on to the things believed, and had communion with Christ. She too was sacrificed, while the pagans themselves acknowledged that no woman among them had suffered so many and such terrible things. (Eusebius, *Church History* 5.1.18-19, 41-42, 55-56)

PASSION OF PERPETUA AND FELICITAS: [Perpetua writes:] 9
While we were still in official custody, my father out of his affection for me would have desired with words to turn me around and have prevailed upon me to change my purpose. "Father," I said, "do you see, for example, this utensil lying here, a waterpot or something else?" And he said, "I see it." And I said to him, "It could not be called by any other name than what it is, could it?" And he said, "No." "Even so I cannot call myself by any other name than what I am, a Christian." . . .

After a few days, we were placed in the prison. I was terrified, because I had never experienced such darkness. O day of despair! Terrible heat because of the crowding. Extortion by the soldiers. Worst of all I was tormented by anxiety for my baby. . . . I claimed the right for the baby to remain with me in prison. At once I recovered my health, and I was relieved of my worry and anxiety for my baby. The prison suddenly became a palace for me, so that I preferred to be there rather than anywhere else. . . .

XIX. [The compiler continues:] As for Felicitas, she too experienced the Lord's grace in this manner. She was now in the eighth month with child (for she was pregnant when arrested). As the day of the games approached, she was in great sorrow lest her martyrdom be postponed because of her pregnancy (since it was not lawful for a pregnant woman to be exhibited for punishment) and she should shed her holy, innocent blood later with heinous criminals. Her fellow martyrs were also greatly saddened that they would leave behind alone such a good companion and fellow traveler in the same road of hope. On the third day before the games they poured forth prayer to the Lord in united and common grief. Soon after the prayer her birth pains came upon her One of the assistants of the prison guards said to her, If you suffer so much in this, what will you do when you are tossed to the wild beasts, whom you despised when you refused to sacrifice?" She responded, "What I suffer now, I suffer myself. But at that time another will be in me who will suffer for me, since I will suffer for him." Thus she gave birth to a girl, whom one of the sisters brought up as her own daughter. . . .

The day of their victory dawned, and they went joyfully in procession from the prison to the amphitheater as if to heaven. Their appearance was composed, and they trembled, if at all, with joy and not fear. Perpetua followed with shining appearance and calm step, as a wife of Christ, as beloved of God, putting down everyone's stare with the intensity of her own eyes. . . .

The martyrs kissed one another so that they might accomplish their martyrdom with the customary rites of the kiss of peace. . . . Perpetua, having yet more pain to taste, was struck to the bone and cried out. She herself guided the wavering right hand of the inexperienced gladiator to her throat. It was as if so great a woman, who was feared by the unclean spirit, could not die unless she herself willed it. (3; 15; 18; 21)¹

10 MONTANISTS: The Phrygians received the beginning of their heresy from a certain Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla. They considered these women to be prophetesses and Montanus to be a prophet. (Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 10.25)

11 The devil . . . raised up and filled with a spurious spirit two other women so that like [Montanus] they spoke in ecstasy, unsuitably and abnormally. (An anonymous opponent, quoted by Eusebius, *Church History* 5.16.9)

12 There suddenly came forth a certain woman prone to ecstasy who presented herself as a prophetess and acted as if she were filled with the Holy Spirit. . . . That woman, who previously by deceptions and tricks of the demon attempted many things to deceive the faithful, among other things by which she deceived many dared frequently even this, that by an invocation not to be despised she pretended to sanctify the bread itself and to celebrate the eucharist and she offered the sacrifice to the Lord by the sacrament of the usual prayer. She also baptized many, employing the

customary and proper words of interrogation so that nothing might seem different from the ecclesiastical rule. (Firmilian in Cyprian, *Epistles* 75 [74].10) XIX.

TERTULLIAN: A certain female viper of the Cainite heresy, who recently spent some time here, carried away many with her most venomous doctrine, giving first importance to destroying baptism. . . . That most atrocious woman, to whom it was not lawful to teach correctly, knew very well how to kill the little fishes [Christians] by taking them away from the water. . . . 13

The impudence of that woman who assumed the right to teach [against baptism] of course did not seize for herself also the right of baptizing. . . . For how would it seem worthy of belief that Paul would give to a female the power to teach and to baptize who did not permit a woman boldly to learn. (*On Baptism* 1; 17)

The very women among the heretics — what impudence! For they dare to teach, to dispute, to do exorcisms, to promise healings, perhaps also to baptize. (*Prescription Against Heretics* 41) 14

HIPPOLYTUS: When a widow is appointed she is not ordained but she shall be chosen by name. . . . Let the widow be instituted by word only and (then) let her be reckoned among the (enrolled) widows. But she shall not be ordained, because she does not offer the oblation nor has she a (liturgical) ministry. But ordination is for the clergy on account of their (liturgical) ministry. But the widow is appointed for prayer, and this is (a function) of all (Christians). (*Apostolic Tradition* 11.1, 4-5)² 15

APOSTOLIC CHURCH ORDER: Three widows shall be appointed, two to persevere in prayer for all those who are in temptation, and for the reception of revelations where such are necessary, but one to assist the women visited with sicknesses, she must be ready for service, discrete, communicating what is necessary to the presbyters, not avaricious, not given to much love of wine, so that she may be sober and capable of performing the night services, and other loving service if she will; for these are the chief good treasures of the Lord. (5)³ 16

DIDASCALIA: Wherefore, O bishop, . . . those that please thee out of all the people thou shalt choose and appoint as deacons: a man for the performance of the most things that are required, but a woman for the ministry of women. For there are houses whither thou canst not send a deacon to the women, on account of the heathen, but mayest send a deaconess. Also, because in many other matters the office of a woman deacon is required. In the first place, when women go down into the water, those who go down into the water ought to be anointed by a deaconess with the oil of anointing. . . . But let a man pronounce over 17

XIX. them the invocation of the divine Names in the water.

And when she who is being baptized has come up from the water, let the deaconess receive her, and teach and instruct her how the seal of baptism ought to be (kept) unbroken in purity and holiness. . . . And thou hast need of the ministry of a deaconess for many things; for a deaconess is required to go into the houses of the heathen where there are believing women, and to visit those who are sick, and to minister to them in that of which they have need, and to bathe those who have begun to recover from sickness. (16)⁴

DISCUSSION

Women most often appear in early Christian literature in their traditional roles of wives and mothers. The quotations from Clement of Rome and Polycarp (XIX.1, 2) are similar to the "Household Codes" of the New Testament, which in turn reflect the norms of Jewish, Greek, and Roman society about the functions and duties of different classes in society. The husband was the head of the family, but in the sphere of the home the wife had the management of affairs, although with ultimate responsibility to his authority. Clement uses the verb form of the noun in Titus 2:5, "good managers of the household," and both passages use the same language of submission that characterized the "Household Codes."⁵ Clement and Polycarp share the word for family love or affection (*stergō*; cf. the related noun in 2 Tim. 3:3), and Polycarp distinguishes this love for the husband from the *agapē* love (active good will) that the wife has for all others.

Clement of Alexandria has descriptions of a woman's household duties that are traditional.⁶ He is notable among early Christian authors, however, for his emphasis on the spiritual equality of men and women (XIX.3).⁷ "The virtue of man and woman is the same," "Marriage is an equal yoke" and "The name human being is common to men and women."⁸ The bodily anatomy of men and women differs, but "in respect to the soul, there is sameness."⁹ Clement's concern in discussing male-female relations and marriage, as in dealing with other topics, is virtue. He nonetheless accepts the societal norms about family structure: The woman ordinarily is submissive to her husband. When it comes to matters of "virtue and salvation," however, there is a superior calling to which the wife adheres.

Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage are usually contrasted in temperament and in views on philosophy and culture, but it is remarkable how they agree on many matters of morality. Tertullian is usually castigated for some harsh words about women.¹⁰ Nevertheless, he penned one of the most beautiful tributes to Christian marriage in early Christian literature (XIX.4). Tertullian in this context was offering a contrast to the problems caused by a mixed marriage for a Christian

woman married to a pagan husband. Her Christian activities (keeping fasts and vigils, visiting the poor, going to evening love feasts, exchanging the kiss of peace, showing hospitality) would either be resisted or be occasions of suspicion by a pagan husband, not to mention the pagan customs in which he would wish his wife to participate.¹¹ Tertullian, furthermore, as a Montanist wrote of the superior value of chastity over marital relations¹² and opposed second marriages, even in the case of the death of a spouse.¹³ These attitudes, however, do not detract from his attractive picture of the shared religious life of two believers united in marriage.

On the other hand, many Christian women (and men) lived a single life, whether from choice or failure to find a suitable mate (XIX.5, 6). The apologists pointed to this as proof that Christians did not engage in sexually promiscuous rituals. In fact, they repeat the common philosophical viewpoint of the time that marriage was only for bringing children into the world. This limitation reduces the Biblical teaching about sexuality in marriage (e.g. 1 Cor. 7:2-5), but it is understandable in a time when the common options were the extremes of sexual indulgence or the revulsion against sex promoted in the ascetic movements of the time. Even those Christian authors who defended marriage against heretical groups (Marcionites and some Gnostics) often regarded virginity as a higher form of life. Asceticism had a powerful appeal in the world of late antiquity. Early Christians felt that appeal and while affirming the goodness of creation and marriage recognized that a person could forego a good in the interests of (for them) a higher calling (XIX.6).

The great respect for virginity in the mainstream of the church and the statements that refer favorably to those women and men who lived their lives faithfully without entering into marriage were the orthodox counterpart to those teachings that required abstinence altogether from sexual activity. We find this viewpoint not only in clearly heterodox circles (Marcionites and Gnostics) but in the apocryphal acts, whose orthodoxy is often suspect, but many of which flourished in a borderland between the mainstream of the church and other currents of thought.

The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (a major surviving part of the *Acts of Paul*) are typical of the ascetic emphasis in the apocryphal acts, although more orthodox in doctrine than some of the others. Thecla's refusal of marriage in order to live a life of continence reflects the ascetic tendencies so prominent in the apocryphal acts. For these documents the gospel message became, "Fear one single God only, and live chastely."¹⁴ The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* were used to support the right of women to teach and to baptize (since she baptized herself).¹⁵ Regardless of the accuracy of the narratives, and there are a number of problematic features of her story, she is a reminder of the importance of women in spreading the Christian message. There evidently was a real person named Thecla who made quite an impact in southeastern Asia Minor, for her cult became

widespread. Her desire to accompany Paul in his missionary travels evidently involved difficulties of which she was aware, hence her offer to cut her hair, presumably so she could pass as a man. The statements about Thecla's missionary activities (XIX.7) do not specify the setting in which she did her teaching other than in homes. The second-century pagan critic of Christianity, Celsus, complained that the women's quarters of houses were among the places where the Christian message spread.¹⁶ The persecutions experienced by Thecla for refusing the life expected of her and following Paul and his teachings (not included in the quotations) parallel in some respects the stories of women martyrs.

Martyrdom was an equal opportunity employer, and some of the most notable names in the early history of Christian martyrdom were women. Two of the earliest and two of the most impressive martyrs of either sex were Blandina and Perpetua.¹⁷ We are fortunate to possess a detailed contemporary account of the persecution that occurred in 177 in Lyons, Gaul (modern France), contained in a letter written by the churches of Vienne and Lyons to fellow believers in the provinces of Asia and Phrygia and preserved by Eusebius (*Church History* 5.1-4). The letter offers much data for a theology of martyrdom as well as many insights into beliefs and customs at a crucial time in early Christian history.¹⁸ The persecution was particularly severe, and many interesting stories involving a number of heroic individuals (and others not so heroic) came out of the experience. Although many persons were involved in martyrdom, the individual who emerged as the emotional inspiration for the Christians, the marvel of the unbelievers, and the heroine to modern readers is the young slave Blandina (XIX.8). The fire of persecution was fanned by reports of immorality among the Christians such as the apologists had to refute (Ch. XVI). Hence, Blandina added to the usual confession of the martyrs, "I am a Christian" (cf. XIX.9),¹⁹ that Christians did not do the things of which they were accused. Although young, physically not appearing to be strong, and as a woman not expected to be so indomitable, she demonstrated the appropriateness of the title "martyr," that is "witness," and represented the way in which the martyrs won attention and admiration for the Christian faith.²⁰ Blandina not only imitated Christ in her passion but she and others also were sustained by the presence of Christ. In their suffering was manifested "Christ's glory" and "everlasting fellowship with the living God."

The *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* makes explicit the point that Christ suffers in and with his people (XIX.9). The document incorporates the diary of Perpetua, making it notable as one of the rare writings of a woman from the early church. The compiler identifies Vibia Perpetua as "nobly born, well educated, a married woman, . . . with an infant son at the breast, and about twenty-two years of age" (2). She and five other catechumens (including two slaves, Revocatus and Felicitas) were arrested. The portion that is quoted records the first of repeated efforts by

Perpetua's father to dissuade her from her Christian confession. Between her arrest and imprisonment she was baptized. A striking feature of Perpetua's diary is the number of visions (dreams) she had while in prison, one of the features that has caused some scholars to associate the document in some way with Montanism. Perpetua's courage in many tribulations, her modesty, and her victorious confession, placing Christ above family and position in society, made an indelible impression on North African Christianity.

Tertullian did not like women in any teaching or leadership position (XIX.13, 14), but he is not the whole story. However, it is mainly in schismatic and heretical bodies that we hear of women taking teaching and leadership roles.²¹ They were especially prominent in the Montanist movement.²² Montanism gets its name from Montanus, one of the leaders in a movement that revived prophecy and called for stricter Christian living.²³ The Montanists called themselves the "New Prophecy," but their opponents called them the "Phrygian heresy." Beginning in central Asia Minor, the movement spread to Rome and North Africa. Women, especially the prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla, were prominent in the beginning and continued to exercise a leadership in the movement far greater than women did in the great church and to an extent that disturbed orthodox churchmen. At least this was so in Asia Minor (XIX.12). It may not have been true everywhere, for Tertullian in North Africa (after he identified with Montanism) refers to a woman who received visions during church but reported their contents only after the conclusion of the services.²⁴

The principal objection of their opponents to Montanism (XIX.9) was the practice of ecstatic prophecy. A fourth-century literary debate between a Montanist and an orthodox Christian clarifies that the orthodox did not object to women prophesying and cites biblical examples — Miriam, Mary, daughters of Philip. Making an unwarranted extension of the Scripture, however, the orthodox champion claims that for women to write books under their own names was to "prophesy without a veil" (1 Cor. 11:5); but he seems to speak for the church at large when he says, "we do not permit women to speak in the assemblies nor to have authority over men" (1 Tim. 2:12).²⁵

Polycarp's instructions to widows (XIX.2) to pray unceasingly is reminiscent of 1 Timothy 5:5. The language of the widow as an "altar of God" was fairly common in the early centuries.²⁶ Two strands of thought are reflected in the imagery. The gifts offered for the support of widows were viewed as a sacrifice, hence to give to widows was like bringing a sacrifice to the altar. The ministry performed by widows was especially prayer, and prayer was viewed as a spiritual sacrifice; hence widows were the place where sacrifice was offered to God.

Widows as an order of ministry (1 Tim. 5:9-12) were not always clearly distinguished from widows as an object of charity, but the church orders

(XIX.15, 16) make clear that some widows were set aside as a distinct class. There seems to have been a continuity in their presence, along with bishops and deacons, in at least some of the churches from New Testament times. It is assumed that many of them will not be physically capable of much activity. Their ministry is the very important ministry of prayer. A notable residue from early times, now in an orthodox setting, is that in answer to prayer the widows may receive revelations. Those widows still able to do so were supported by the church for benevolent activities, especially in the care of the sick. The twofold ministry of prayer and benevolence by widows harkens back to 1 Timothy 5:5, 10. It appears that in some instances a place for virgins in the ministry of the church was found by including them in the order of widows.²⁷

Another class of women servants in the church, not always distinguished from widows, were female deacons, or deaconesses. Apart from possible New Testament references (perhaps Rom. 16:1; more likely but not certainly 1 Tim. 3:11), the earliest reference to women deacons may be from the pagan author Pliny (VII.1). He speaks of those called *ministrae*, "female servants." His manner of expression suggests a technical usage, but this is not certain, and the word did not continue as the Latin term for a deaconess (Latin used the feminine form of a borrowed Greek word, *diakona*). These women referred to by Pliny may have had an official designation in the church, but there are other possibilities. They may only have been known as devoted to Christ (a usual meaning of the word is a devotee of a deity) or as especially active in Christian service, or Christians may have preferred this term over "slaves" (which these women were) to describe valued slaves who were also believers.

The earliest certain reference to deaconesses is in the third-century Syriac *Didascalia*. Here they are paired with male deacons and assigned duties in the baptism of women and in visiting women at home where a woman's services were more appropriate than a man's. Although Tertullian took particular offense to women baptizing (XIX.13, 14),²⁸ the *Didascalia* shows them assisting at baptism while a male clergyman presided. The deaconesses' responsibilities included teaching the new female converts.

Christian literature reflects the circumstances of the time in having less to say about women than men. Fewer women than men are known by name. Since the activities of women to which objection was taken pertained especially to false teachers, this is understandable, for there was a convention not to dignify opponents (men or women) by giving their name. In certain notable cases it was impossible to avoid this, so it is a recognition of the importance of Priscilla and Maximilla in Montanism that they are often mentioned along with the male leader (XIX.10). Thecla, too, made enough of an impact that her name was preserved, for the orthodox had to make accommodation for her. Otherwise, martyrs were the main class of women from the early period whose names are

preserved—there are others besides the ones mentioned in these selections.²⁹ In spite of their virtual anonymity, women were clearly important to the life and growth of early Christianity. In orthodox, mainstream circles the same situation prevailed as that reflected in the New Testament documents: a very full involvement of women in every aspect of the church's life except speaking in the public liturgical assemblies and serving as elders/bishops.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clark, Elizabeth A. *Women in the Early Church*. Message of the Fathers of the Church 13. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1983.

Ferguson, Everett. "Women in the Post-Apostolic Church." Carroll D. Osburn, ed. *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, Vol. I. Joplin: College Press, 1993. Pp. 493-513.

LaPorte, Jean. *The Role of Women in Early Christianity*. Studies in Women and Religion 7. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982.

Scholer, David M., ed. *Women in Early Christianity*. Everett Ferguson, ed., Studies in Early Christianity, Vol. XIV. New York: Garland, 1993.

NOTES

¹ I have used the chapter numbers and translated from the text of Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).

² Gregory Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus* (Reissued with Corrections; London: SPCK, 1968), pp. 20-21.

³ A. Harnack, *Sources of the Apostolic Canons* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1895), pp. 19-21.

⁴ R. Hugh Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum: The Syriac Version Translated and Accompanied by the Verona Latin Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), pp. 146-148.

⁵ P. H. Towner, "Household Codes," *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), pp. 513-520 with further bibliography. *First Clement* 21.6-7 gives further moral advice to wives.

⁶ For example, *Instructor* 3.10.

⁷ Donald Kinder, "Clement of Alexandria: Conflicting Views on Women," *The Second Century*, Vol. 7 (1989-90), pp. 213-220; repr. in Everett Ferguson, ed., *Christianity and Society: The Social World of Early Christianity*, Recent Studies in Early Christianity, Vol. I (New York: Garland, 1999), pp.55-62.

⁸ *Instructor* 1.4.

⁹ *Miscellanies* 4.8.

¹⁰ Notably, *On the Apparel of Women* 1.1.

¹¹ *To His Wife* 2.4-6.

¹² *Exhortation to Chastity* 1.

¹³ *On Monogamy*.

¹⁴ *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 9.

¹⁵ Tertullian, *On Baptism* 17.

¹⁶ Origen, *Against Celsus* 3.49, 55-56.

¹⁷ W. H. C. Frend, "Blandina and Perpetua: Two Early Christian Heroines," *Les Martyrs de Lyon (177): Colloque à Lyon 20-23 Septembre 1977* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1978), pp. 167-177; repr. in David Scholer, ed., *Women in Early Christianity*, in Everett Ferguson, ed., *Studies in Early Christianity*, Vol. XIV (New York: Garland, 1993), pp. 87-97; Stuart Hall, "Women among the Early Martyrs," *Studies in Church History*, Vol. 30 (1993), pp. 1-21; repr. in Everett Ferguson, ed., *Christianity in Relation to Jews, Greeks, and Romans*, Recent Studies in Early Christianity, Vol. II (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 301-321.

¹⁸ Denis Farkasfalvy, "Christological Content and Its Biblical Basis in the Letter of the Martyrs of Gaul," *The Second Century*, Vol. 9 (1992), pp. 5-25; repr. in Everett Ferguson, ed., *Christianity in Relation to Jews, Greeks, and Romans*, Recent Studies in Early Christianity, Vol. II (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 279-299.

¹⁹ For example, *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*; *Acts of Justin and Companions* 3-4; *Martyrdom of Saints Carpus, Papyrus, and Agathonice*.

²⁰ Everett Ferguson, "Early Christian Martyrdom and Civil Disobedience," *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, Vol. 1 (1993), pp. 73-83;

repr. in idem, *Christianity in Relation to Jews, Greeks, and Romans*, Recent Studies in Early Christianity, Vol. II (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 267-277.

²¹ That women were significantly better off in Montanist and Gnostic sects is effectively challenged by Paul McKechnie, "Women's Religion' and Second Century Christianity," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 47 (1996), pp. 409-431; repr. Everett Ferguson, ed., *Christianity and Society: The Social World of Early Christianity*, Recent Studies in Early Christianity, Vol. I (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 31-53.

²² Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 151-197, concludes that although we know of some women who took exceptional leadership positions in Montanism, the evidence is lacking that women in general had different circumstances in Montanism from what they experienced elsewhere.

²³ The sources are conveniently collected in English translation in Ronald E. Heine, *The Montanist Oracles and Testimonia*, Patristic Monograph Series 14 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1989) and William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia: Epigraphic Sources Illustrating the History of Montanism*, Patristic Monograph Series 16 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1996).

²⁴ *On the Soul* 9.

²⁵ The whole dialogue is translated in Ronald E. Heine, *The Montanist Oracles and Testimonia*, pp. 113-127 (the passage referred to is on p. 125).

²⁶ Carolyn Osiek, "The Widow as Altar: The Rise and Fall of a Symbol," *The Second Century*, Vol. 3 (1983), pp. 159-169.

²⁷ Tertullian, *On the Veiling of Virgins* 9; this may be the meaning of Ignatius, *Smyrnaeans* 13. Charlotte Methuen, "The 'Virgin Widow': A Problematic Social Role for the Early Church?" *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 90 (1997), pp. 285-298; repr. in Everett Ferguson, ed., *Christianity and Society: The Social World of Early Christianity*, Recent Studies in Early Christianity, Vol. I (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 63-76.

²⁸ Epiphanius, *Against Heresies* 42.3.4 says Marcionites authorized women to baptize.

²⁹ For example, Agathonice among the saints of Pergamum and Donata, Vestia, Secunda, Sperata, Januaria, and Generosa among the martyrs of Scilli.

