

NINETEENTH-CENTURY WOMEN'S
MOVEMENTS AND THE BIBLE

SBL Press

THE BIBLE AND WOMEN

An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History

Edited by Mary Ann Beavis, Irmtraud Fischer,
Mercedes Navarro Puerto, and Adriana Valerio

Volume 8.1: Nineteenth-Century
Women's Movements and the Bible

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Edited by

Angela Berlis and Christiana de Groot

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Preface

This volume began a decade ago as a symposium hosted at the University of Bern. It was preceded by an international call for proposals for essays to be included in the volume *Women's Movements and the Bible in the Nineteenth Century*. In October 2012 scholars convened from as far away as India and United States, in addition to countries in Europe. We listened to each other's presentations and discussed the ideas, methods, history and biblical interpretation provided. It was a rich and inspiring few days of engaging with colleagues and enjoying the hospitality provided by the Departement für Christkatholische Theologie at the University of Bern.

In addition to the essays presented at the conference, the editors invited other scholars in the field to contribute to the volume so that it would include studies of a more extensive and diverse group of women and women's movements. In the end, we had more material than could be accommodated in a single volume. We would like to thank Dr. Irmaud Fischer, Professor of Old Testament at Graz University, for initiating the creation of a second volume, *Die Bibel war für sie ein politisches Buch: Bibelinterpretationen der Frauenemanzipationsbewegungen im langen 19. Jahrhundert*, volume 29 in the series *Theologische Frauenforschung in Europa* (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2020). This book gave a home to the significant articles we could not include in this volume. We would also like to thank the authors for their graciousness as we negotiated which essays to include in which publication.

To bring this volume to completion took many hands, and we would like to thank the students and institutions that supported this effort. Christiana de Groot is grateful for the grant she received from the gender studies minor of Calvin University, which underwrote the work of her student assistant, Alyssa Gagnon. Her help with editing and formatting was invaluable. In addition, we are indebted to Angela Berlis and her assistant Erika Moser and student assistant Lis Dil for carefully working through the text, footnotes, and bibliography. We thank the Karl-Fran-

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We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the generous, gracious, and thoroughly professional guidance of the editors at SBL Press. It was a delight to work with Nicole L. Tilford and Bob Buller. Without their expertise, this publication would still be languishing.

Finally, we wish to thank the authors for their patience in waiting for this volume to be published. It has been ten years in the making, and we realize that their contributions reflect their research conducted many years ago. We trust that their insights still have great value and that in the midst of our current state of battling the latest variant of COVID-19 and awareness that we have to actively promote a peaceful world, we will be inspired by the courage, struggles, brilliance, and dedication of the many women who have gone before us.

Angela Berlis and Christiana de Groot
Bern and Grand Rapids

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABGB	Allgemeine Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch
AHSI	<i>Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu</i>
AJPS	<i>Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies</i>
ALR	Preußische Allgemeine Landrecht
APTF	Archiv für philosophie- und theologiegeschichtliche Frauenforschung
ASE	<i>The Anti-Slavery Examiner</i>
AW	<i>All the World</i>
BAG	Beiträge zur Aargauer Geschichte
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BDF	Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine
BNS	La Bibbia nella storia
BW	Bible and Women
Cc	Code civil
CC	<i>Christian Commonwealth</i>
CH	<i>Church History</i>
CivCatt	<i>La Civiltà Cattolica</i>
CM	<i>Chambers' Miscellany</i>
CR	<i>The Contemporary Review</i>
ECVMKJ	Exhibition catalogue Villa Merkel and Kunstsammlung Jena
EDG	Enzyklopädie Deutscher Geschichte
ETR	<i>Études théologiques et religieuses</i>
EUZ	Exegese in unserer Zeit. Kontextuelle Bibelinterpretationen
ExAud	<i>Ex auditu</i>
FE	Frauenforschung in Europa
FemSt	<i>Feministische Studien</i>
FFTS	Frankfurter Feministische Texte – Sozialwissenschaften

FGHP	Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung in der Historischen Pädagogik
<i>Frau</i>	<i>Die Frauenbewegung</i>
FS	<i>Die Frau im Staat</i>
FSy	Forum Systematik
FZ	<i>Die Frauen-Zeitung</i>
GF	Geschichte der Frauen
<i>Glei</i>	<i>Die Gleichheit</i>
GPCS	Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies
GSER	Grenzüberschreitungen: Studien zur europäischen Reiseliteratur
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HF	Helvetia Franciscana. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Brüder und Schwestern des hl. Franz und der hl. Klara in der Schweiz
<i>HF</i>	<i>Helvetia Franciscana: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Franziskusorden in der Schweiz</i>
HS	L'Homme Schriften
<i>Hum</i>	<i>The Humanitarian</i>
<i>IkTh</i>	<i>Interkulturelle Theologie</i>
IRM	<i>International Review of Mission</i>
JBSLP	<i>Josephine Butler Society Library Pamphlets</i>
JC	Judaism in Context
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JESWTR	<i>Journal of the European Society of Women in Theological Research</i>
<i>JFH</i>	<i>Journal of Family History</i>
JFSR	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
JIWS	<i>Journal of International Women's Studies</i>
JRH	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
KJV	King James Version
KSG	Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft
LKG	Literatur, Kultur, Geschlecht, Große Reihe
LSVB	Literature and Society in Victorian Britain
MCL	<i>Magazine of Christian Literature</i>
MHT	Murray's Handbook for Travellers
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
MM	<i>Macmillan's Magazine</i>

MT	<i>The Methodist Times: A Journal of Religious and Social Movement</i>
NA	<i>Nuova Antologia</i>
NB	<i>Neue Bahnen</i>
NCS	The Nineteenth Century Series
ND	<i>Nuova DWF</i>
NT	New Testament
OEM	Oxford English Monographs
OT	Old Testament
PP	<i>Priscilla Papers</i>
P&P	<i>Past and Present</i>
PEQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PSNCACS	The Princeton Series in Nineteenth Century Art, Culture, and Society
PSNCWC	Palgrave Studies in Nineteenth-Century Writing and Culture
RAC	<i>Religion and American Culture</i>
RdT	Rassegna di teologia
RÉ	<i>Revue Égypte</i>
RG	Rechtsgeschichte und Geschlechterforschung
RPA	<i>Rhetoric and Public Affairs</i>
RT	<i>Rassegna di Teologia</i>
SB	<i>Storm-Bell</i>
SCHL	<i>Studies in Church History. London</i>
SGF	Schriften zur Gleichstellung der Frau
SHMME	The Social History of the Modern Middle East
SHSE	Studien zur historisch-systematischen Erziehungswissenschaft
SLNCBWW	Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers
SOK	Studien zur orientalischen Kirchengeschichte
SSAA	<i>Smithsonian Studies in American Art</i>
SSGP	Die Schweiz 1798–1998: Staat—Gesellschaft—Politik
StAc	Studien zur aussereuropäischen Christentums-geschichte
StSin	Studia Sinaitica
SV	<i>Sächsische Vaterlandsblätter</i>
SWR	Studies in Women and Religion
SymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium series

<i>TRE</i>	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> . Edited by Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–.
TT	Topos Taschenbücher
VS	<i>Victorian Studies</i>
WA	Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Weimarer Ausgabe], 30 vols.
WCTU	Woman's Christian Temperance Union
WGL	Women in German Literature
<i>WHR</i>	<i>Women's History Review</i>
WPWML	The Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures
WSW	<i>W.C.T.U. State Work</i>
WWCTU	World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union
ZSSR	<i>Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZuK	Zugänge zur Kirchengeschichte

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Introduction

Angela Berlis

The series *The Bible and Women* devotes two volumes to the epoch of the so-called long nineteenth century, which in this volume extends not from the French Revolution to 1914 (as Eric Hobsbawm proposed) but to the end of the First World War. That there are two volumes is due to the fact that there are more extensive sources available compared to previous centuries. This richness makes it possible to illuminate various aspects of the interpretation of the Bible by women. While volume 8.2 is devoted to women's religious movements of this epoch,¹ this present volume, 8.1, is concerned with the politically motivated women's movements in the nineteenth century. They are, however, not a completely new phenomenon but rather part of more comprehensive emancipation efforts reaching back further in history.²

As a consequence of the revolutions occurring around 1848, first the peasantry and then the newly forming working class demanded a political voice. The modern women's movements arose beginning in the 1840s in the context of general movements for freedom that demanded human rights for all. These occurred regionally in different ways and with their own internal rhythm: in the United States, it was primarily in the context of the movement to free the slaves, in India in the challenge to the strict

1. Michaela Sohn-Kronthaler and Ruth Albrecht, eds., *Faith and Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Religious Communities*, BW 8.2 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019).

2. The conventional term *first [wave] women's movement* is misleading, since it gives the impression that women joined forces for the first time in this period in order to protest against discrimination. It is for this reason that, where necessary, the term used here is *modern women's movements*. The series *The Bible and Women* as a whole is designed to demonstrate that a patriarchal social order and an androcentric view of the world at no time remained uncontested and that therefore there were women's movements at other times in history as well.

caste system, in Great Britain in the workers' movement, and worldwide in the struggle against feudal systems.

In this volume, modern women's movements that arose in the long nineteenth century in various countries are presented by considering certain female protagonists and their method and manner of appealing to the Bible, by means of which they promoted the social and religious rights of women. Rights of women and rights for women could mean quite different things in the nineteenth century. The entire legal situation in Europe and in its colonies resembled a patchwork quilt. The legal realities for women were different from country to country.³ The commitment to women's rights, then, required differing forms and directions in different national contexts. The discourses about women's rights dealt with questions of personal freedom, the legal foundation for participation in public life, equality, and independence. Often the women themselves were not completely in agreement with one another about what rights they wanted to claim. The volume shows the diverse ways in which women appeared, with the Bible in their hands, as advocates for women and their rights.

The women investigated here were bound basically by three central concerns: they campaigned for

- ◆ access to education, which started at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the improvement in the education of girls and culminated about 1920 with the general admission of women to study at universities;
- ◆ the removal of social discrimination, particularly of enslaved persons, women, and other groups; and
- ◆ the legal equality of women with men, which was combined more and more in the course of the long nineteenth century with the demand for voting rights.⁴

3. Ute Gerhard elaborates on this in an impressive manner in her article in this volume. See also Ute Gerhard, ed., *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts: Von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 1997).

4. The debate about the ordination of women is not dealt with expressly in this volume since it extends far into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Nevertheless, several of the female protagonists dealt with here, such as Frances Willard, advocated for it.

1. The Bible as a Benchmark for Women Writing in the Nineteenth Century

Women authors throughout time have judged the Book of Books differently according to what it has to say about women. This was also the case in the nineteenth century. For feminist and suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), the Bible was above all a patriarchal book that contained little that was positive for women. *The Woman's Bible*, published by her in 1895/1898, should primarily be understood as a critical involvement with the Bible and its devastating cultural consequences for women.⁵ While Stanton had to endure harsh criticism even in her own ranks, other women veiled their provocative hermeneutical views through sonnets, hymns, or edifying texts.⁶ Others—for example, sisters Angelina Grimké Weld (1805–1879) and Sarah Moore Grimké (1792–1873)—invoked the Bible in order to sue for their rights as women to speak in public.⁷ Still others considered individual women or figures from the Bible as liberating for themselves.⁸ Thus Deborah, the “mother in Israel,” for example, found

5. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible: A Classic Feminist Perspective* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002). See Carolyn De Swarte Gifford, “Politicizing the Sacred Texts: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Woman's Bible,” in *A Feminist Introduction*, vol. 1 of *Searching the Scriptures*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 52–63. See also, among other titles, Elisabeth Griffith, ed., *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Angela Berlis, “Elisabeth Cady Stanton e la *Woman's Bible*: Un'esegesi femminista nel XIX secolo,” in *Donne e Bibbia: Storia ed esegesi*, ed. Adriana Valerio, BNS 21 (Bologna: Edizione Dehoniane, 2006), 117–37.

6. See Natasha Duquette, *Veiled Intent: Dissenting Women's Aesthetic Approach to Biblical Interpretation* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016). This book includes above all female poets and writers of the eighteenth century but also does reach into the nineteenth century. Stanton's achievement was finally recognized on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the publication of her work.

7. See in this regard Michel Grandjean, “Sarah Grimké's Bibel: Eine Waffe im Kampf gegen die Sklaverei der Schwarzen und die Unterwerfung der Frauen,” in *Die Bibel war für sie ein politisches Buch: Bibelinterpretationen der Frauenemanzipationsbewegungen im langen 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Irmtraud Fischer et al., FE 29 (Münster: LIT, 2020), 151–71.

8. These did not necessarily have to be only female figures. For many, Jesus Christ was the Liberator par excellence. There were also negatively identified figures. See in this regard Per Faxneld, *Satanic Feminism: Lucifer as the Liberator of Woman in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

an equally large resonance among suffragists and female preachers, as well as among Jewish and Christian women.⁹

This remarkable practice of referring to the Bible may astound readers today,¹⁰ especially when such a reference occurs outside the religious women's movements or when such a reference is mentioned by those champions of the rights of women who understood themselves as secular activists. Consider, for example, the work of Louise Otto-Peters (1819–1895), the founder of the General German Women's Association (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein*), or that of Christabel Pankhurst (1880–1958), a British suffragist who expanded political activism into religious commitment.¹¹ Such references are indications that the Bible in the still largely Christian-influenced societies of the nineteenth century was pervasive and potent as a cultural resource and the bedrock of education in general.¹²

Women writers who appealed to the Bible, used it in their struggle for equal rights, and appropriated it for themselves did so again and again

9. See, e.g., Jonathan M. Hess, *Deborah and Her Sisters: How One Nineteenth-Century Melodrama and a Host of Celebrated Actresses Put Judaism on the World Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018). On the reception of Deborah, see also Joy A. Schroeder, *Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); on the reception of Deborah in the nineteenth century, see esp. 138–89.

10. In contemporary portrayals of literary history, though, aspects such as religion or Bible reception are lacking to a great extent. See, e.g., Dale M. Bauer, ed., *The Cambridge History of American Women's Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). In this anthology, only one article (by Sandra M. Gustafson) carries the word *religion* in its title.

11. On Louise Otto-Peters, see, for example, Carol Diethe, *Towards Emancipation: German Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Berghahn, 1998), 138–52. Religion plays no role here. My own research, however, reveals that religion and the knowledge of biblical paradigms are of significance for understanding Otto-Peters's involvement. On Christabel Pankhurst, see Jacqueline R. DeVries, "Transforming the Pulpit: Preaching and Prophecy in the British Women's Suffrage Movement," in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 318–33.

12. This was true for all social and cultural areas. See, e.g., Beatrix Müller-Kampel, "Eva in blauseidenen Hosen, der entzweigerissene Absalom und Holofernes' abgeschlagener Kopf: Das Alte Testament im Puppentheater des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Bibel- und Antikenrezeption: Eine interdisziplinäre Annäherung*, ed. Irmtraud Fischer, EUZ 23 (Münster: LIT, 2014), 359–77.

in new ways, both negatively and positively.¹³ Women took action on the basis of biblical demands or wrote about the Bible. Through this activity, they became interpreters of the Bible in the context of their times. They claimed for themselves the right and the authority to interpret the Bible, to preach and proclaim the Bible, sometimes as charismatic female prophets, sometimes as nuns, sometimes as officeholders, sometimes as authors of books for adults, for women, or for children, and sometimes as the writers of pamphlets or of prayers.¹⁴ Their creativity was extensive.

2. Education as the Foundation of New Exegesis of the Bible

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the number of publications by women about the Bible increased in comparison with previous centuries. Because of the development of the publishing industry since the eighteenth century, there were now more possibilities for publishing. At the same time, the educational possibilities for girls and women, and thus also their access to the Bible in the original languages, remained limited. Women had recognized the basic problem already much earlier. Thus, Mary Astell (1666–1731), for example, wrote that women, inasmuch as they lacked linguistic proficiency, knew only what men provided in their translations. The lack of educational opportunities led to women being deprived of the right to interpretation.¹⁵

As a consequence of the increasing professionalization of theology and especially of historical-critical exegesis in the nineteenth century, it became evident first of all that women were not numbered among the professional exegetes of Scripture. They were excluded even when they learned the ancient languages and grappled with the scientific methods of their time

13. See, e.g., Michael Penzold, *Begründungen weiblichen Schreibens im 19. Jahrhundert: Produktive Aneignungen des biblischen Buches Rut bei Bettine von Arnim und Thomasine Gyllembourg* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2010).

14. See, e.g., Kienzle and Walker, *Women Preachers and Prophets*. This volume contains essays from all epochs of Christian history. For the nineteenth century, there are essays on Maria W. Stewart and Baby Suggs by Judylyn S. Ryan, on Catharine Booth by Pamela J. Walker, and on Mother Leaf Anderson and the Black Spiritual Churches of New Orleans by Yvonne Chireau, as well as a contribution about the British suffragist movement by Jacqueline R. deVries.

15. See, e.g., Gerda Lerner, "One Thousand Years of Feminist Bible Criticism," in *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness from the Middle Ages to 1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 138–66.

at home through private instruction or perhaps helped their fathers or brothers in writing exegetical works. Thus, Elizabeth Wordsworth (1840–1932), the daughter and sister of an Anglican bishop who taught herself Greek, became a “research assistant” for her father in the production of a commentary on the Bible but later herself wrote works on the Decalogue and the Psalms. From 1879 to 1909, she directed a newly opened college for women, Lady Margaret Hall, in Oxford and became one of the most influential female pioneers of higher education for women.¹⁶ Women in this epoch were scholars in private, but they were not recognized as *Privatgelehrte*, a recognized social position for learned, wealthy male experts in Germany. This was the situation even though in their publications women dealt thoroughly with biblical studies and were completely current in their research.¹⁷ Still, they succeeded in carving out a space for themselves in the public sphere in which they spoke and wrote about the Bible. Many of their efforts were forgotten. Sometimes politically active women were not forgotten, but it was overlooked that they also relied on biblical arguments and stories.¹⁸

Women who were active literarily and involved in social politics were confronted again and again with the same Bible passages intended to support the subordination and inferiority of the female sex. These were above all the two creation narratives in Gen 1:26–31 and Gen 2:7–3:24, as well as the misogynous Pauline interpretation in 1 Cor 11 with its construction

16. Wordsworth was against voting rights for women. See Rebecca G. S. Idestrom, “Elizabeth Wordsworth: Nineteenth-Century Oxford Principal and Bible Interpreter,” in *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, ed. Christiana de Groot and Marion Ann Taylor, SvmS 38 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 181–99. For another example from the Church of England, in which the practice of reading the Bible in the family of the longtime British prime minister William E. Gladstone is discussed, see David Bebbington, “The Spiritual Home of W. E. Gladstone: Anne Gladstone’s Bible,” *SCHL* 50 (2014): 343–53.

17. See Marion Ann Taylor, “Women and Biblical Criticism in Nineteenth-Century England,” in Sohn-Kronthaler and Albrecht, *Faith and Feminism*, 29–62.

18. In the two-volume standard work by Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz, the headings “Bibel,” “Religion,” and “Religiosität” are lacking in the subject index for vol. 2, *Vom Vormärz bis zur Gegenwart*, whereas the situation is different in vol. 1, *Vom Mittelalter bis zur Aufklärung*. See Kleinau and Opitz, eds., *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1996). The publication falls in a period before the subject of religion, and the aspects accompanying it for the period after the eighteenth century were again considered when conducting historical research on education.

of a gender hierarchy and the anthropology derived from it.¹⁹ In order to oppose this, alternate biblical interpretations that advocated for gender equality were needed. The issue of the translation of the biblical text, or of the ability to read the text in its original language, was a central concern. A correct translation, it was expected, would promote the liberation of women.²⁰ With her translation published in 1876, Julia Smith (1792–1878), for example, “repeated the work of Erasmus of Rotterdam.”²¹ Like him, she, too, translated the Bible five times: twice from the Greek, twice from the Hebrew, and once from the Latin Vulgate.²² Her concern was for an authentic text; her goal was the reinterpretation of passages that had been inaccurately translated and interpreted. Selections from her translation were used later in *The Woman’s Bible*.

3. The Pursuit of Equality and the Removal of Social Discrimination

The connection between biblical interpretation and social action became apparent in an exemplary way in Victorian America. The Bible there was the “pivotal element of private and public discourse.”²³ The concerns of the abolitionist movement, which gained in public significance beginning in the 1770s in the United States, were clearly connected with

19. So, for example, Mary Wollstonecraft in her text *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London: Johnson, 1792). Although this was a secular tract promoting equal rights for women, Wollstonecraft still had to deal with the creation narrative and its exegesis that the woman was created for the man. See Holly Morse, “The First Woman Question: Eve and the Women’s Movement,” in *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field*, ed. Yvonne Sherwood with Anna Fisk (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 69–74. On the problem in general, see also Kari Elisabeth Børresen and Emanuela Prinzivalli, eds., *Christliche Autoren der Antike*, BW 5.1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2015).

20. Today this is designated as a process of making people aware of gender bias.

21. See Lerner, “One Thousand Years of Feminist Bible Criticism,” 159.

22. Julia E. Smith, *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments: Translated Literally from the Original Tongues* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1876). On Julia Smith, see Marla J. Selvidge, *Notorious Voices: Feminist Biblical Interpretation, 1500–1920* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 213–26.

23. Annette Kreuziger-Herr, “Sola Scriptura: Genesisinterpretation, christliche Anthropologie und Feminismus im viktorianischen Amerika,” in *Glaube und Geschlecht: Fromme Frauen—Spirituelle Erfahrungen—Religiöse Traditionen*, ed. Ruth Albrecht, Annette Bühler-Dietrich, and Florentine Strzelczyk, LKG 43 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008), 102.

the struggle for independence and, from 1820 on, with the worldwide strengthening of the temperance movement, which sought to ban alcohol, and with the suffragist movement. All argued using texts from the Bible. For example, the Adam and Eve motif played an important role in the abolitionist movement.

Women decisively contributed their share to these movements against social discrimination, but they also had to contend for a public role. When American women journeyed in 1840 to London to take part in the World Anti-Slavery Convention, they were seated in a women's balcony and were not permitted to speak publicly. On the basis of this key experience, Stanton, together with Quaker Lucretia Mott (1793–1880), developed for the first time the concept of a women's rights conference. This occurred finally in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, and culminated in drafting the Declaration of Sentiments. This close connection between involvement in the abolitionist movement and the transition to becoming an activist for women's rights did not exist in this way in European countries.²⁴ As a result, the American women's movement organized itself, took its concerns to the public, and opposed the male-dominated field of theology much earlier than the women's movements in Europe. The American women's movement was thus a great inspiration for many women in Europe and on other continents. In the United States, women expressed themselves in public against slavery and the subordination of women, and they found a hearing. Individual women played a public role that would have been unthinkable in Europe. Journalist, newspaper publisher, and women's rights activist Victoria Claflin Woodhull Martin (1838–1927), for example, became a candidate for the office of president in 1870!²⁵

At the same time, the image of women that remained socially and culturally dominant was strongly influenced by religion. Disputes about the gender characteristics attributable to women, namely, piety, purity,

24. See Claudine Raynaud, "Sojourner Truth: Foi chrétienne, abolitionnisme, féminisme," *ETR* 94 (2019): 231–52. This is true, for example, in the case of Norway. See Jone Salomonsen, "Sharing the Theological Hopes of First Wave (Suffrage) Feminists," *JESWTR* 24 (2016): 181.

25. See Antje Schrupp, *Das Aufsehen erregende Leben der Victoria Woodhull* (Königstein: Helmer, 2002). An abridged revised edition appeared later in the light of the candidacy of Hillary Clinton: Antje Schrupp, *Vote for Victoria! Das wilde Leben von Amerikas erster Präsidentschaftskandidatin Victoria Woodhull (1838–1927)* (Sulzbach: Helmer, 2016).

domesticity, and submissiveness, were conducted in the context of the interpretation of the Bible. The authority of the Bible as such was not questioned; what was questioned was rather human (mis)interpretations and historical development.

The struggle against social discrimination and the struggle for the equality of men and women were woven together, even though not all female authors were of the same view regarding the normative roles and relationship between the sexes. The struggle for the rights of women has, of course, a long tradition.²⁶ The *Declaration of the Rights of the Woman and Female Citizen*, written by Olympe de Gouges (1748–1793) in 1791 during the French Revolution, is one example. In the United States, which was the first modern republic constituted as a democracy, the Constitution, written after the Declaration of Independence of 1776, stipulates fundamental rights for all, which nevertheless had to be reclaimed by women in the nineteenth century. Thus Sarah Grimké, for example, demanded civil rights for women. In 1869, the book *The Subjection of Women* by British philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) was published and initiated heated discussions in various European countries.²⁷

The religious landscape was a decisive context for these and later developments. In the nineteenth century, society in the United States was more multifaceted than in Europe. Free exercise of religion was, of course, one fundamental motivation for the emigration to America and was written into the American Constitution from the very beginning. Female biblical interpreters belonged to various so-called mainline churches or to other churches and religious communities but also to specific religious subgroups within their own religion (Christianity and Judaism).²⁸

26. See the detailed contribution by Ute Gerhard in this volume.

27. John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1869).

28. For example, in the emerging Pentecostal movement: see Margaret English de Alminana, “Florence Crawford and Egalitarian Precedents in Early Pentecostalism,” in *Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministry: Informing a Dialogue on Gender, Church, and Ministry*, ed. de Alminana and Lois E. Olena, GPCS 21 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 103–39. Florence Louise Crawford (1871–1936) knew well both Frances Willard and Katherine Bushnell (both of whom are dealt with in this volume) through work in the temperance movement. The relationship between religious affiliation and involvement on behalf of the rights of socially disadvantaged persons, in this case the struggle against slavery, has not been studied in depth for very long. The abolitionist movement was sustained on both sides of the Atlantic primarily by

Women played an important role in English and American nonconformist churches, or in dissenting groups, in the emancipatory exegesis of the Bible in the nineteenth century,²⁹ just as they did in the emerging black churches in the United States. Since these groups often did not belong to the social elite of WASPs (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants) in the United States, these women were doubly marginalized. This, in turn, had consequences for the acceptance of their statements.³⁰

4. The Rediscovery of Female Interpreters of the Bible Due to Research in the Twentieth Century

The (re)discovery of women who engaged the Bible in the nineteenth century occurred through the work of female exegetes and historians of the twentieth century.³¹ Research concentrated on the United States. This is not surprising for a number of reasons. *The Woman's Bible*, published toward the end of the nineteenth century, was a milestone in the history of

so-called dissenters. See Elizabeth J. Clapp and Julie Roy Jeffery, eds., *Women, Dissent, and Anti-slavery in Britain and America, 1790–1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Involvement in the struggle against slavery, however, did not automatically mean a commitment to the rights of women, as, for example, Lucretia Mott and Victoria Woodhull had to experience painfully at the already-mentioned World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. See Carol Faulkner, *Lucretia Mott's Heresy: Abolition and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

29. See, e.g., Timothy Larsen, "The Bible and Varieties of Nineteenth-Century Dissent: Elizabeth Fry, Mary Carpenter, and Catherine Booth," in *Dissent and the Bible in Britain, c. 1650–1950*, ed. Scott Mandelbrote and Michael Ledger-Lomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 153–75. Fry was a Quaker; Carpenter was a Unitarian; Booth was the "mother of the Salvation Army." See also Linda Wilson, "'Constrained by Zeal': Women in Mid-nineteenth Century Nonconformist Churches," *JRH* 23 (1999): 185–202. See also the chapter by Claudia Setzer on Frances Willard in this volume.

30. For the European mainland, with its less diverse religious landscape, there is a need for further research regarding the connection between affiliation to dissident groups and biblical exegesis in the nineteenth century, but also regarding female interpreters of the Bible who were members of churches that were officially recognized by the state of a country (*Landeskirchen*).

31. A list of the female interpreters of the Bible who lived and worked in the long nineteenth century is found in Marion Ann Taylor and Agnes Choi, eds., *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters: A Historical and Biographical Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 559–61. Most of those named come from the English linguistic sphere.

women's interpretation of the Bible. In addition, the religious landscape in the United States in the nineteenth century was far more varied than that in Europe and offered diverse possibilities for research. Moreover, American female researchers in the second half of the twentieth century began to rediscover their own multifaceted history and use it in their own research much earlier than female academics in other countries.³²

Of defining importance for historians engaged in gender studies was Gerda Lerner's research. Born in Vienna as Gerda Kronstein in 1920, she became an American citizen in 1943. She had a broad diachronic and synchronic horizon in her work. In 1963, Lerner brought the Grimké sisters back from historical oblivion and into the narrative of history; in 1993, she published a book on the origin of the feminist consciousness, in which she presents "One Thousand Years of Feminist Bible Criticism."³³ Lerner and others along with her make it clear that the genealogy of feminist readings of the Bible stretches back much further than just the modern age.³⁴ The perception has grown in recent times, however, that the historical interpretation of the Bible by women also as a rule has followed the Western matrix of biblical interpretation.

While the English linguistic sphere in the long nineteenth century has been researched quite thoroughly with respect to the persons involved

32. For the German linguistic sphere, see Luise Schottroff, Silvia Schroer, and Marie-Theres Wacker, *Feminist Interpretation: The Bible in Women's Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), originally published in German in 1995. This book also contains a historical overview.

33. Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels against Slavery* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967); Lerner, *Creation of Feminist Consciousness*. The chapter "One Thousand Years of Feminist Biblical Interpretation" in *Creation of Feminist Consciousness* also makes clear the level of knowledge about biblical interpretation by women at that time, which has expanded enormously since then (138–66). On Lerner's biography, see Gerda Lerner, *Fireweed: A Political Autobiography* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Marit Rullmann and Werner Schlegel, "Gerda Lerner: Frauenhistorikerin, Geschichtsphilosophin, Autorin," in *Denken, um zu leben: Philosophinnen vorgestellt*, ed. Rullmann and Schlegel (Wiesbaden: Marix, 2018), 249–54.

34. In regard to the term *feminist*, I follow Jorunn Økland: "All (including pre-Enlightenment) readings that aim to overturn gender hierarchies where the male is posited above the female will here be counted as 'feminist.'" See Økland, "Feminist Readings of the Bible," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible 4: From 1750 to the Present*, ed. John Riches (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 262. Økland here refers to the understanding of Marla J. Selvidge in her book *Notorious Voices*.

and their textual interpretation (e.g., the interpretation of certain biblical books or stories of the Old Testament), this is much less true for other parts of the world.³⁵ However, this is changing. Basic research is ongoing, stimulated by conferences and panels sponsored by the Society of Biblical Literature; through publications in academic journals such as the online magazine *lectio difficilior*, published in Bern (Switzerland); by dictionaries and monographs in recent times; and not least of all, by the series *The Bible and Women*, compiled in four cultural and linguistic spheres. Thus, volume 8.2 in this series, published in 2014 in German (and in 2019 in English and in Italian), is devoted likewise to the long nineteenth century. It includes additional large regional areas, such as southern and eastern Europe and the German-speaking area, and reveals surprising results, such as the discovery that an Italian nun had written a commentary on the entire Bible already in the middle of the nineteenth century.³⁶

The connections between the nineteenth-century women's movements in different countries, especially between movements in the United States, England, France, and Germany, deserve more attention, because all began after the 1840s. Nevertheless, a general survey³⁷ that includes the interpretation of the Bible as a basis of argumentation is still lacking. There are already some studies for individual countries: on individual women's activists such as Elisabeth Malo (1855–1039) in Germany or Helene von Mülinen (1850–1924) in Switzerland, but also on women in South Africa

35. See Christiana de Groot and Marion Ann Taylor, eds., *Recovering Nineteenth-Century Women Interpreters of the Bible*, SymbS 38 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), which deals with the feminine interpreters of the Bible from England and the United States who at the time of the publication of the book were still overlooked; Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *A New Gospel for Women: Katherine Bushnell and the Challenge of Christian Feminism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir, eds., *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on the Women of Genesis* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006); Taylor and Weir, *Women in the Story of Jesus: The Gospels through the Eyes of Nineteenth-Century Female Biblical Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

36. Adriana Valerio, "Biblical Interpretation in the Transformation of Women's Religious Communities in Nineteenth-Century Italy," in Sohn-Kronthaler and Albrecht, *Faith and Feminism*, 163–82.

37. See in general Ute Gerhard, *Frauenbewegung und Feminismus: Eine Geschichte seit 1789*, 3rd ed. (Munich: Beck, 2018); Kristina Schulz, ed., *The Women's Liberation Movement: Impacts and Outcomes* (New York: Berghahn, 2017); Rita Huber-Sperl, ed., with Kerstin Wolff, *Organisiert und Engagiert: Vereinskultur bürgerlicher Frauen im 19. Jahrhundert in Westeuropa und den USA* (Königstein: Helmer, 2002).

and in recent years in Latvia, in the Scandinavian region, or on female poets with a consciousness for women's rights in Armenia and the United States.³⁸ Further research is necessary here and is in part occurring. Just as necessary is work on individual women's organizations and their criticism of the ontological and social subordination of women in society and the churches that were founded on a certain reading of the Bible.³⁹

38. On Elisabeth Malo, see Christiane Markert-Wizisla, *Elisabeth Malo: Anfänge feministischer Theologie im Wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1997). Malo called for a "second Reformation" that was intended to benefit women. Her work is supported profusely with biblical references. On Helene von Mülinen, see Doris Brodbeck, *Hunger nach Gerechtigkeit: Helene von Mülinen (1850–1924)—Eine Wegbereiterin der Frauenemanzipation* (Zürich: Chronos, 2000); see also Brodbeck, "A Swiss Champion of Women's Rights: The Reception of the Bible by Helene von Mülinen," in Sohn-Kronthaler and Albrecht, *Faith and Feminism*, 287–301. On women in South Africa, see Lize Kriel, "African Women, Conversion and Evangelism in Nineteenth Century Southern Africa: A View from the 'Far North,'" in *Polyzentrische Strukturen in der Geschichte des Weltchristentums*, ed. Klaus Koschorke and Adrian Hermann StAC 25 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 257–67. On women in Latvia, see Dace Balode, "Die Bibel auf der Seite der Unterdrückten: Bibelinterpretationen von Frauen auf dem Territorium Lettlands in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts," in Fischer et al., *Die Bibel war für sie ein politisches Buch*, 67–90. On women in the Scandinavian region, see Päivi Salmesvuori, "Drei Frauen und drei Herangehensweisen an die Bibel im Kontext der Reformbewegungen in Finnland," in Fischer et al., *Die Bibel war für sie ein politisches Buch*, 19–42; Hanna Stenström, "The Hand Maid of the Lord, Not of the Lords: Fredrika Bremer Reads the Bible in the Service of Women's Emancipation," in Fischer et al., *Die Bibel war für sie ein politisches Buch*, 43–66. On female poets with a consciousness for women's rights in Armenia, see Mariam Kartashyan, "Die Bedeutung biblischer Motive im literarischen Schaffen armenischer Frauen," in Fischer et al., *Die Bibel war für sie ein politisches Buch*, 91–122. On female poets in the US, see Caroline Blyth, "Fromme Subversion: Die (eigenwillige) Verwendung der Paulusbriefe in Emily Dickinsons Dichtung und Korrespondenz," in Fischer et al., *Die Bibel war für sie ein politisches Buch*, 123–50.

39. Protestant women's associations immediately come to mind first of all. However, that women from Catholic traditions also have contributed much to the interpretation of the Bible becomes clear, for example, in volume 7.2 of this series: Maria Laura Giordano and Adriana Valerio, eds., *Das katholische Europa im 16.–18. Jahrhundert*, BW 7.2 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2019). The case is similar for Anglican and Orthodox women. For a Roman Catholic female scholar who spoke up in regard to educational policy above all, see Marie-Theres Wacker, "Dr. phil. Barbara Klara Renz (1863–1955): Eine katholische Interpretin der Bibel zwischen Ethnologie, Religionsphilosophie und dem Streit für das Bildungsrecht von Frauen," *lectio difficilior* 2 (2013): <http://www.lectio.unibe.ch>.

5. Female Bible Interpreters and Their Importance in Women's Movements in the Long Nineteenth Century

The present volume contains contributions on women in the United States, Scandinavia, Italy, England, Switzerland, and India.⁴⁰ Whoever reads their stories discovers quickly that women and women's movements networked with each other in the long nineteenth century. It is impressive how many connections occurred between individual protagonists, as revealed in the individual chapters, for example, among Katherine Bushnell (1855–1946), Josephine Butler, and Frances Willard, as well as between Bushnell and Pandita Ramabai in India. Through these connections, which in many cases became friendships, transnational networks emerged for the abolition of slavery, for temperance, and for the rights of women.⁴¹ These also included transnational as well as supra- and interdenominational exchanges about the liberating message of the Bible.

Such networking required the mobility of wealthy women through travel, similar courses of education among them, and also the transfer of ideas or a body of thought by means of books and other products of the press. Through these means, women who often came from the bourgeoisie could build a relationship and communicate with each other over great distances. Networking involved influence flowing in both directions. This history of transnational networking is partly interwoven with the international antislavery movement but also with colonial history and the history of imperialism.⁴² The latter is also true even when the country in question

40. Simultaneously with the German edition of this volume, another volume has been published on this subject, in which there are articles about Finland, Norway, Latvia, Armenia, and the United States (see n. 38). See Fischer et al., *Die Bibel war für sie ein politisches Buch*. These contributions were originally meant by the editors as part of vol. 8.1. See preface.

41. See on this Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson and Anja Schüler, eds., *Forging Bonds across Borders: Transatlantic Collaborations for Women's Rights and Social Justice in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2017). This collection deals with, among others, the Women's Christian Temperance Union and many of the women connected with it (Frances Willard, Pandita Ramabai, Josephine Butler, Katharine Bushnell), as well as Frederika Bremer. A detailed thematization of the Bible is lacking.

42. On the international antislavery movement, see, e.g., Maartje Janse, "Holland as a Little England? British Anti-slavery Missionaries and Continental Abolitionist Movements in the Mid Nineteenth Century," *P&P* 229 (2015): 123–60. Examples of

did not have any colonies at all, since the influence of colonial thought and colonial economics showed itself in these countries also.⁴³

The contributions published in this volume are presented in the following summaries. The first contribution, by political scientist and philosopher of law Ute Gerhard, is fundamental to understanding the legal situation of women in the nineteenth century. The laws determined the legal space for women, and it was against this confinement that—as is shown in all the other contributions of this volume—women sought emancipation by appealing to the liberating power of the Bible. Gerhard, an icon of women's studies in German-speaking research, provides an almost monographic contribution on the particularism of women's rights in the nineteenth century. She takes as her starting point the legal situation of women, which developed locally in very different ways. She then describes the development toward more women's rights in the various spheres of law, together with the inevitably recurring setbacks. For the first time, she correlates legal development with the national and regional women's movements and in this way illuminates the life contexts of the standard bearers of the movement for women's rights. This detailed introduction, dealing with legal history in a volume that focuses on the reception of the Bible, explains many arguments and actions on the part of the exemplary women activists and women's movements presented later in the volume.

Freelance historian Elisabeth Joris, from Zurich, is concerned with Swiss pedagogue and liberal Catholic Josephine Stadlin (1806–1875) and her idiosyncratic exegesis of the eight Beatitudes in the framework of liberal educational conceptions about the right to the same education and training for women and men. Stadlin, who dedicated herself to the emancipation of the female sex, was sympathetic to Reform Catholic and early feminist ideas about the equality of the sexes. These ideas were advocated in the dissident movement of German Catholicism (Deutschkatholizismus) and in the Academy for the Female Sex in Hamburg (Hamburger Hochschule für das weibliche Geschlecht) but disappeared from the politi-

transnational networking as a result of colonial history are Pandita Ramabai and Helen Barrett Montgomery. See especially the chapters by Christine Lienemann-Perrin and Royce M. Victor in this volume.

43. See Patricia Purtschert and Harald Fischer-Tiné, eds., *Colonial Switzerland: Rethinking Colonialism from the Margins* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). This collection, to be sure, concerns Switzerland and the twentieth century to a great extent but is essential for this issue.

cal stage after the failed revolution of 1848. For Stadlin, the Beatitudes were an “outline of human education,”⁴⁴ a pedagogical program for the development of independent and empathetic action. She entrusted this development above all to girls and women as a socially justified educational mandate. In spite of her interconnectedness in transnational networks, Stadlin’s broad impact remained limited to the German linguistic sphere.

Adriana Valerio from the Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II in Naples sketches how, from the middle of the nineteenth century up to the controversy about Modernism, the interpretation of the Bible served different groups as a basis and justification for social change. The contribution shows, similar to the chapter by Joris, that antagonistic forces have an effect *within* a single denomination on what significance is attributed to texts from the Bible. The Bible was seen as a bulwark, as a foundation of ecclesiastical renewal, as a social basis for a faith lived out nondenominationally, or as a source of inspiration for the call for the rights of women. By reference to several women and their biographies, Valerio demonstrates how Catholic women, sharing these various tendencies within Italian Roman Catholicism, used the Bible for their particular concerns. What bound them together was that all of them were highly conscious of the significance of the bible for the shaping of Christian identity. The prejudicially fraught view of women that was advocated in official ecclesiastical statements was conveyed to believers with the translation of the biblical text made by Antonio Martini, with official ecclesiastical approval. The Italian women’s movement, with the first Roman Catholic feminist in Italy, Elisa Salerno (1873–1957), led the way, criticizing such misinterpretations as a means for excluding women and in this way preparing the way for the opening of civil rights to women.

Two chapters focus on the Scandinavian context: Norway and Iceland, which at that time belonged to Denmark.⁴⁵ Aud V. Tønnessen, from the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oslo, places at the center of her reflections two pioneers of the Norwegian women’s movement and the manner in which they used the Bible against biblical arguments for the subordination of women and in favor of their feminist argument. Pastor’s daughter and writer Camilla Collett (1813–1895) and artist and daughter

44. Josephine Stadlin, *Die Erziehung im Lichte der Bergpredigt* (Aarau: Sauerländer, 1856), 1.

45. For further contributions in the Scandinavian context, see Salmesvuori, “Drei Frauen und drei Herangehensweisen”; Stenström, “Hand Maid of the Lord.”

of physics professor Aasta Hansteen (1824–1908) received their inspiration for new interpretations of the Bible less from their Protestant context than from contemporary literature and philosophy. In the 1870s, they engaged with John Stuart Mill's book on the subjection of women,⁴⁶ which provoked a broad discussion. Hansteen, who lived for nine years in the United States, knew the progressive American women's movement and took inspiration for her late work from *The Woman's Bible*. Her concern was the inner liberation of women and their recognition as human beings socially equal to men. She found the arguments for a changed social and cultural acceptance of women, what today we would call gender justice, in the reinterpretation of biblical texts. She saw Christ as the true liberator of women. The article is also enlightening regarding the interaction between individual female protagonists.

Arnfríður Guðmundsdóttir, from the Icelandic University in Reykjavík, uses the life and work of Bríet Bjarnhéðinsdóttir (1856–1940) to show the origins of the Icelandic women's movement. For Bjarnhéðinsdóttir, the Bible is not per se a book that oppresses women but became such only through the traditional interpretation, in which men used biblical words in order to impose their will on their own wives and daughters. Through such misinterpretations and a misguided history of interpretation, women were deprived of an independent development of their personality. Bjarnhéðinsdóttir even expressed her suspicion that the Christianization of the Nordic countries had an adverse impact on the position of women and pointed, as was frequently done in other contexts in the period of awakening nationalism, to the stronger position of the female sex in the traditional Nordic sagas.

Christiana de Groot, from Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, investigates the exegesis in the book *Women of Israel* (1845) written by Jewish and British woman Grace Aguilar, who, in spite of her death at the age of thirty-one, left behind a very extensive and in her own time widely received oeuvre.⁴⁷ De Groot presents the three overlapping con-

46. Mill, *Subjection of Women*. The German edition points to the fact that this work from 1869 is also inspired by Harriet Taylor. See John Stuart Mill, *Unter Rückgriff auf Gedanken von Harriet Taylor, Die Unterwerfung der Frauen*, in John Stuart Mill: *Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. Ulrike Ackermann and Hans Jörg Schmidt (Hamburg: Murmann, 2012), 1:439–560.

47. Grace Aguilar, *The Women of Israel, or, Characters and Sketches from the Holy Scriptures...* (London: Groombridge, 1845). Several of her works were translated, the

texts of Aguilar's interpretation: her inclusion in the Jewish minority in the Christian-dominated English majority culture, her status as a woman in a patriarchal Jewish community, and her interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in exchange with other Jewish and Christian women and men of her time. Aguilar's exegesis can be understood well against the background of the efforts for Jewish emancipation in England during the nineteenth century. She emphasizes the compatibility of Jewish and English identity and pleads for the maintenance of the Jewish tradition, without assimilation. Within her Jewish community, she campaigned for the religious education of girls and women without giving up the socially established notion of separate gender spheres. Aguilar's exegesis of the laws of the Pentateuch is precritical and consciously gender-specific; that is, she writes as a woman for women about texts that concern them.

Champion of women's education, advocate of the rights of women, and translator of the Bible Ramabai (1858–1922), called "Pandita," that is, an educated woman, campaigned in India against the caste system and for improvement in the status of widows. Theologian Royce M. Victor, now bishop of the diocese of Malabar in the Church of South India, presents her life and her biblical hermeneutics. Having come into contact with Christianity through the Gospel of Luke, Pandita Ramabai was baptized in 1883 on her own initiative and undertook journeys to England and the United States, which led her to connect with the leading advocates of the women's movement. After learning Greek and Hebrew, she translated the Bible into Marathi. Christine Lienemann-Perrin, professor emerita for ecumenism, mission, and contemporary intercultural questions in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Basel, devotes herself to the comparison of the respective readings of the Bible by Pandita Ramabai and Helen Barrett Montgomery (1861–1934) and places these in the context of the ecumenical women's missionary movement. Montgomery's gender-sensitive perception of the Bible led her to idiosyncratic translations. For example, she understood 1 Tim 2:15 to teach that women were not redeemed through the birth of her own children but rather because of the

work treated here into French. See Aguilar, *Les Femmes d'Israel* (Paris: Cerf, 1900). There are translations of Aguilar's other books, e.g., in German: *Mädchenfreundschaft* (Leipzig: Voigt & Günther, 1857) and *Lohn einer Mutter: Eine Erzählung für Mütter und Töchter* (Leipzig: Voigt & Günther, 1859), and in Spanish: *Influencias de la educación doméstica: Primera parte* (Madrid, 1860). Translations into Italian are unknown to me.

birth of Jesus. The Baptist Montgomery, who played a decisive role in initiating the Women's World Day of Prayer, and Ramabai, who advocated a nondenominational Christianity, can be assigned to the same missionary community of interpretation of their time. Both belonged in the educational elite and displayed their eloquence as well as their understanding of the Bible as a book that liberates women. Both also received support from their fathers and husbands. They also influenced each other in their thought. But, on the basis of the colonial situation, they stood on two mutually antagonistic sides. The differences become visible in their analyses of mission in the context of colonialism and in the perception, very critical in the case of Ramabai and uncritical in the case of Montgomery, of the colonial and imperial world order. Both already perceived much that today has become standard regarding gender-sensitive Bible translation, exegesis critical of caste and class, and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics.

Several articles present American women active as Bible interpreters. Joy A. Schroeder from Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, shows the intersectional conjunction of various different discrimination criteria in her article on Maria Stewart's exegesis of the Bible in the context of the Afro-American women's movement. Stewart (1803–1879) was completely conscious of the fact that not only were women discriminated against for being women but also that black women, the so-called daughters of Africa, who were forced into slavery by the Christian societies of both Americas and who were robbed of their freedom, were afflicted in a twofold manner. As a daughter of a freeborn Afro-American married couple from the northern United States and with her own experiences as a domestic servant, she knew what she fought against. She committed herself passionately to the struggle against slavery and especially for the education of young women. For a long time, she was active as a teacher in different schools. Her knowledge of the Bible allowed her, by referring to female figures in the Bible, to contradict the prohibitions placed on women that were derived from Scripture and, like a prophet, to speak against the prevailing racism that intended to keep black women at the level of domestic servants. Schroeder succeeds in bringing to life the milieu in which Stewart and other fellow campaigners fought against the discrimination against Afro-American women and in demonstrating the necessity and enormous significance of education for social advancement.

Kristen Kobes Du Mez, from Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, points out the involvement of women in important, worldwide

movements in the nineteenth century such as the temperance movement and social purity movement. These women went on to become the standard bearers of a women's Christian internationalism, which, in turn, influenced the ways they themselves read the Bible and advocated for social change. In the center of her reflections stands missionary, doctor, and social reformer Katharine Bushnell (1855–1946), who involved herself in the temperance movement, “in essence a women's movement,” and in the social purity movement in late Victorian America. Bushnell's theology continued to become more radical in the course of her work. The basis for this was her reinterpretation of Gen 1, especially of the role of Eve in the so-called fall.

Claudia Setzer, from Manhattan College, deals with Frances Willard's rejection of fundamentalist biblical exegesis. Willard (1839–1898), a Methodist, was chairperson of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and her audience included conservative Methodist men and women and evangelicals from the West and Midwest. She combined her involvement in movements for abstinence, abolition of slavery, and women's rights with one another. In her bold advocacy of voting rights for women and the ordination of women, she invoked the Bible. She was acquainted with the historical-critical method and employed textual, tradition, and source criticism. She critically tracked down the falsifying translations of the Bible of her time. Her exegesis was, in contrast to *The Woman's Bible*, remarkably free from anti-Judaism.

Amanda Russell-Jones, from Regent College, Vancouver, writes about British feminist Josephine Butler (1828–1906), who was probably the most influential woman of her time. She spoke before politicians and organized campaigns for implementing her concerns, for example, against sexual double standards, which easily caused women to become outcasts, and fought against the Contagious Diseases Acts. Butler read Holy Scripture from the perspective of the victims and in this way became the voice of the outcasts. Butler was profoundly influenced by a Christ-centered hermeneutics and saw Jesus as a liberator. In this way she repeatedly referred to Jesus in the narrative of the woman accused of adultery in John 8, and she also discussed the meaning of Scripture among the male exegetes of her time. In an interview from 1894, she spoke about the “sex-bias”⁴⁸ of male exegetes of the Bible. Butler's decisive contribution, in which she wrote

48. See Taylor and Weir, *Women in the Story*, 209–11.

about a universal moral law, involved the expansion of the horizon of the question of women's rights from the inequality of rights and the chances at education to the question of the oppression of women in the structure of economic, political, and sexual power.

The essay concluding this volume, by Izaak J. de Hulster from the Helsingin Yliopisto and the Georg August University in Göttingen, is devoted to the women who, between 1840 and 1900, explored the biblical lands and conveyed their discoveries in travel accounts but also in scientific articles. Feminist theologian Janet Soskice wrote a fascinating book several years ago about the "sisters of Sinai," a pair of twins from Scotland who rendered an essential contribution to research on biblical manuscripts in Egypt.⁴⁹ More women unknown to the present day were inspired by the Bible and biblical traditions and made contributions to the understanding of the lands of the Bible in the Near East and in Egypt. The women presented in de Hulster's chapter wrote scientific articles in the areas of codicology, regional studies, botany, archaeology, and ethnology. Some of the women, with their descriptions and photographs, also offer interesting insight into the life of the local population. The contribution deals in addition with photography as a new medium of perception and interpretation of biblical stories.

Most of the women dealt with in this volume continued to see the Bible as a normative source, in spite of their critical analysis of it, and attributed great authority to it. For many female interpreters of the Bible, the primary concern was an appropriate translation of biblical texts, while others placed more emphasis on a reinterpretation. In both cases, the goal was, on the basis of Bible readings and interpretations, to arrive at impartial assessments of women that, in the final analysis, led to equal status and value and thereby to a new, nonhierarchical relationship between the sexes.

In regard to the emancipation of women, individual women promoted different aspects; many emphasized the public role of women, while others placed more value on their inner liberation and freedom. With their literary work, though, the women construed themselves as public persons with a public-political concern. This was nothing less than the deconstruction of traditional biblical exegeses and a plea for alternative interpretations

49. Janet Soskice, *Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Found the Hidden Gospel* (London: Vintage, 2010).

that would put right the social and legal status of women. The transnational networking of women and women's movements in the nineteenth century fortified them in the struggle against dominant social, especially legal, general conditions and patterns of perception. An important result of this volume is thus the insight that women in the nineteenth century were far more thoroughly networked than heretofore perceived. To regain this history of networking and to write it back into the history of biblical interpretation, not only that by women, is a socially relevant venture and concern in the whole series *The Bible and Women*.

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