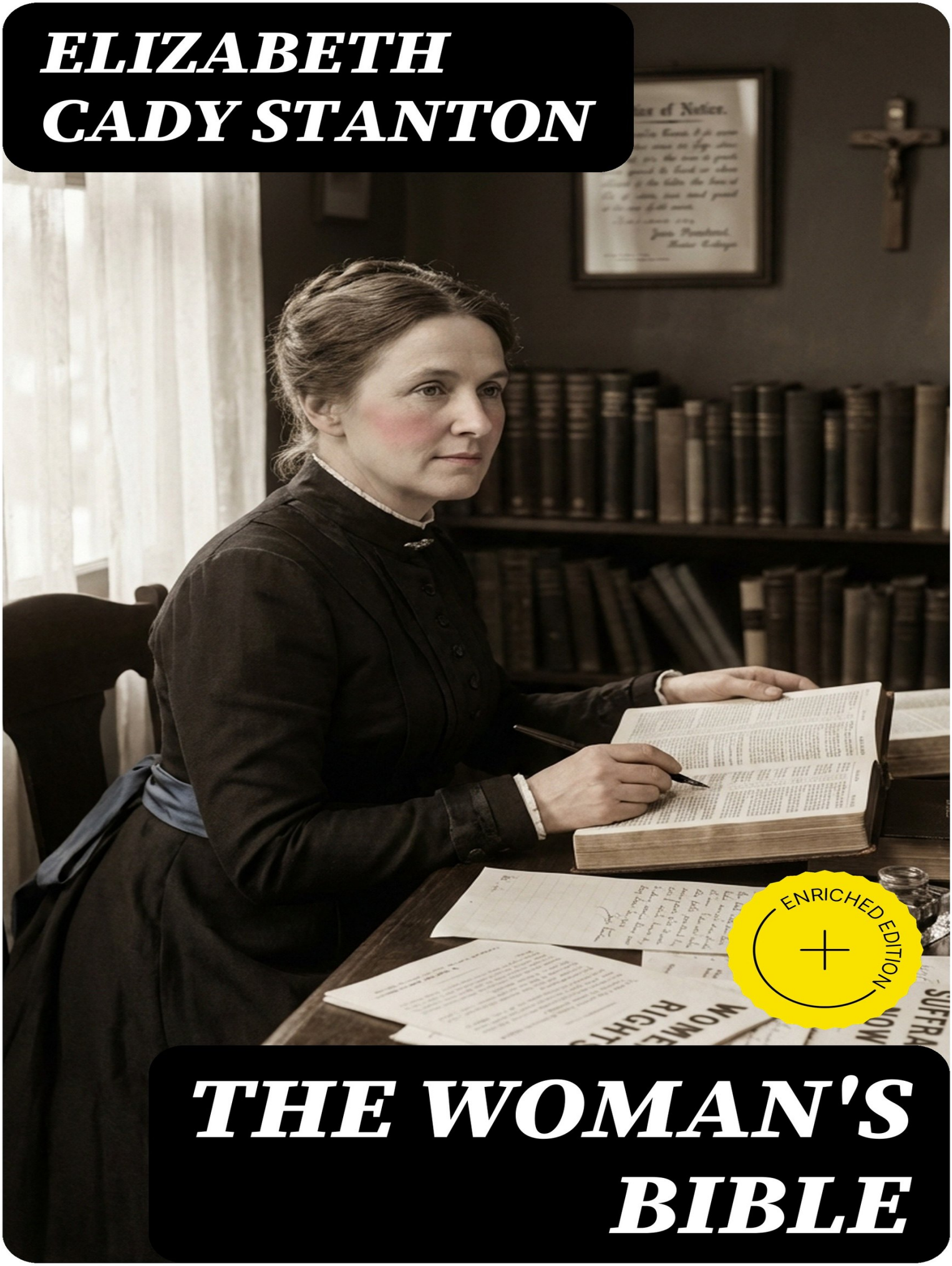
ELIZABETH CADY STANTON



THE WOMAN'S BIBLE

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

The Woman's Bible

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Tristan West

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Table of Contents

Where sacred authority confronts the demand for human equality, this book strides into the charged interval and insists that the ancient record be heard again, this time through voices long kept at the margins, testing every inherited claim with the measure of reason, experience, and the lived realities of women whose lives have been shaped, justified, and sometimes constrained by those very texts that generations have treated as unassailable, so that interpretation itself becomes a battleground where power, conscience, and the promise of justice are negotiated in public view, without disguise and without the customary gatekeepers standing guard.

The Woman’s Bible is the project of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a central figure in the nineteenth-century United States woman suffrage movement, published in two parts in 1895 and 1898. Conceived during decades of organized activism, it addresses the scriptural roots of gender hierarchy by assembling commentaries on passages about women. Stanton served as editor and principal voice, working with a committee of collaborators to bring together perspectives shaped by reformist and scholarly impulses. The result is neither a translation nor a devotional guide, but a provocative inquiry into how religious texts have been read, used, and enforced in social and legal life.

Its central premise is straightforward yet far-reaching: if sacred writings have been invoked to define women’s

status, then women must enter the arena of interpretation and scrutinize those writings for themselves. The commentary selects biblical passages where women appear or where laws and customs concern them, examining the claims that have supported subordination. While anchored in specific excerpts, the enterprise is animated by a broader aim—to reclaim moral and intellectual authority for women in the sphere of religion, and by extension, in public life. Readers encounter analysis rather than dogma, questions rather than creeds, and a sustained invitation to think critically.

Formally, the work gathers notes, essays, and annotations that move across selected portions of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, tracing how translation choices, cultural assumptions, and ecclesiastical traditions have shaped meaning. Stanton’s voice blends polemic with clarity, often juxtaposing customary interpretations with alternative readings grounded in history and common sense. The tone is learned but accessible, and the method is comparative, weighing text against text and principle against practice. By modeling interpretation as a public act, the book places the authority of readers—especially women—at the center of religious and civic conversation.

From the moment of publication, the work stirred intense controversy. Clergy and religious periodicals condemned its approach as irreverent; newspapers amplified the debate. Within the suffrage movement, many leaders feared that challenging biblical authority would alienate supporters, and major organizations publicly distanced themselves from the

project. Stanton’s insistence on intellectual independence nonetheless reflects a strategic conviction: political rights cannot be fully secured while religious arguments for inequality remain uncontested. The storm of reception, while painful for its author, underscores the book’s daring purpose and helps explain why it has remained a touchstone for discussions of faith and feminism.

Its classic status rests first on audacity—few nineteenth-century works so directly confronted the interpretive structures that undergirded women’s subordination. But it also endures because it married that audacity to a durable method: close reading in the service of social reform. The Woman’s Bible challenged not only conclusions but the processes by which conclusions are reached, insisting that interpretation is never neutral. In doing so, it helped widen the intellectual commons, legitimizing women’s participation in theological and historical debate and offering future readers a template for scrutinizing received wisdom without abandoning moral seriousness.

As literature, the book is notable for its distinctive rhetorical craft. Stanton’s prose moves between measured analysis and incisive satire, exposing the inconsistencies of patriarchal reasoning while maintaining a steady focus on practical consequences. The collage-like structure—brief passages followed by commentary—creates a rhythm that invites engagement rather than passive assent. It is argumentative without being obscure, and it leverages irony, analogy, and historical observation to unsettle complacency. These techniques influenced later reform

writing by demonstrating how scholarship and activism can be braided, each strengthening the other, in a style at once polemical and pedagogical.

Thematically, The Woman’s Bible explores power, authority, and the ethics of interpretation. It asks who may speak for tradition and how inherited texts should guide modern life. It weighs custom against justice, law against conscience, and habit against evidence. It is concerned with education, the shaping of public opinion, and the intimate consequences of doctrine within families and communities. Throughout, it balances critique with constructive possibility: if unjust readings have prevailed, more humane readings are conceivable. In that balance lies the book’s enduring appeal, for it couples skepticism toward authority with confidence in reasoned moral judgment.

Historically, the volume is now recognized as an early milestone in feminist biblical criticism and religious reform. It did not found a school so much as prefigure one, sketching questions and methods that later scholars would refine within academic and ecclesial settings. Its influence can be traced in the willingness of subsequent writers to revisit foundational texts, to attend to women’s experiences as interpretive evidence, and to treat theology as a public discourse open to lay participation. Whether embraced or resisted, its example widened the field of who counts as an interpreter and what counts as authoritative reading.

Within Stanton’s career, the book represents a culmination of long commitments. As an advocate who had already helped document the movement’s history and argued for legal change, she turned here to the cultural

narratives that underlay law and custom. The timing—late in the nineteenth century, after decades of organizing—signals both frustration with slow reform and vision for a more comprehensive transformation. The Woman’s Bible thus complements political campaigning by addressing the moral imagination of a society in which religion shaped citizenship, education, and everyday expectation.

For contemporary readers, the work offers a training in critical literacy. It shows how to ask fruitful questions of a revered text, how to assess tradition without contempt, and how to connect interpretation with lived outcomes. Its method does not depend on shared creed; both believers and secular readers can follow its reasoning and evaluate its evidence. The book therefore functions as a bridge: between scholarship and activism, between past and present, and between private belief and public policy. It invites readers to take responsibility for the meanings they accept and the norms they enact.

More than a historical curiosity, The Woman’s Bible speaks to ongoing debates about gender, authority, and the role of religion in civic life. In an era still negotiating inclusive leadership, equitable law, and the ethics of tradition, its call for accountable interpretation remains timely. By insisting that those most affected by a text must help read it, the book affirms a democratic principle at the heart of modern pluralism. Its legacy endures not because it settled arguments, but because it equipped readers to pursue them with courage, rigor, and hope.

Synopsis

Table of Contents

Elizabeth Cady Stanton's The Woman's Bible, published in two parts in 1895 and 1898, presents a systematic feminist commentary on biblical passages concerning women. Written by Stanton with a Revising Committee, it aims to examine how scripture has been used to sanction women's subordination in church and society. Rather than producing a new translation, the work offers critiques and alternative readings to long-accepted interpretations. Stanton frames the Bible as a historical record shaped by male authorship and cultural contexts, urging readers to distinguish enduring ethical principles from time-bound customs. Her overarching purpose is to reclaim interpretive authority for women and to challenge religious justifications for inequality.

The book proceeds book by book and passage by passage, selecting texts that explicitly affect women's status, family roles, legal standing, and spiritual authority. Each selection is followed by commentary that evaluates the textual context, presumed authorship, and effects of established readings on women's lives. Stanton emphasizes the need for lay readers—especially women—to assess interpretations typically reserved for clergy and scholars. She argues that exegesis is never neutral and that inherited readings often reflect patriarchal assumptions. The work's method blends historical awareness, moral critique, and an insistence on individual conscience, positioning biblical

interpretation as a public, participatory enterprise rather than a closed clerical domain.

A central focus falls on Genesis, where Stanton interrogates creation narratives and their use to justify hierarchy between men and women. She challenges readings that treat woman as derivative or culpable, suggesting that such interpretations have encouraged legal and social restraints on women. By contrasting different creation accounts and scrutinizing doctrines derived from them, she questions the theological foundations of female subordination. The analysis underscores how early narratives about marriage, labor, and authority have been used to frame woman as a moral caution. Stanton's commentary seeks to separate mythic or symbolic storytelling from prescriptive norms that have limited women's rights and roles.

Beyond Genesis, Stanton surveys laws and narratives that shaped women's civil and domestic positions in ancient Israel. She examines regulations concerning marriage, divorce, inheritance, vows, purity, and property, noting their cumulative effect on a woman's autonomy. Narrative portraits—of matriarchs, judges, and heroines—are read for both their constraints and their occasional assertions of agency. Stanton highlights practices such as polygamy and concubinage to illustrate the gap between scriptural customs and modern principles of equality. Her approach neither dismisses the Hebrew Bible nor treats it as uniformly prescriptive; instead, she probes how historical circumstances became moral baselines for subsequent generations.

The commentary also considers wisdom and prophetic literature, where ideals of womanhood are praised yet often confined to domestic or deferential roles. Stanton notes how select proverbs, hymns, and didactic passages have been invoked to define obedience and diligence as a woman’s highest virtues. She contrasts these exhortations with prophetic themes of justice and compassion that can be read as inclusive of women’s full personhood. By tracing the interpretive choices that elevate certain verses while marginalizing others, the book reveals how canon and tradition can be curated to endorse limited gender expectations, even when broader ethical horizons exist within the texts.

Turning to the Gospels, Stanton surveys accounts of Jesus’s interactions with women, observing moments of recognition, instruction, and public presence. Encounters with disciples, petitioners, and witnesses suggest a pattern of dignity and engagement that challenges later restrictions on women’s speech and leadership. Stanton argues that these narratives open space for spiritual equality by foregrounding women as learners, benefactors, and messengers. At the same time, she notes how later ecclesiastical traditions sometimes narrowed these roles. Her analysis invites readers to weigh the difference between the openness of the Gospel narratives and subsequent institutional rules regarding women.

Stanton devotes substantial attention to letters attributed to Paul, where directives about silence, veiling, marriage, and authority have shaped church practice. She probes historical context and varying audiences to question

universal applications of restrictive passages. The commentary highlights references to women who labored in early Christian communities, using these mentions to complicate assumptions about leadership and teaching. Stanton also raises issues of authorship and transmission to explain inconsistencies in tone and instruction. Rather than discarding the epistles, she interrogates their reception history, arguing that selective emphasis has amplified verses that limit women while downplaying those that affirm partnership.

Across the work, theological implications are drawn from the cumulative critique. Stanton questions exclusively male images of the divine and challenges claims of infallibility that foreclose debate. She urges women to read critically, to educate themselves in history and languages when possible, and to test religious authority by its ethical fruits. The Woman’s Bible connects interpretive reform with broader social aims, insisting that civic equality cannot rest on texts construed to deny women moral agency. It calls for a reorientation in churches and homes alike, advocating a standard of justice that respects individual conscience and rejects coercive customs.

The publication provoked immediate controversy, eliciting denunciations from clergy and discomfort within segments of the organized suffrage movement. Yet the debate it sparked drew public attention to the link between interpretation and power. The Woman’s Bible endures as a foundational text in feminist biblical criticism, not because it settled questions, but because it opened them for lay readers to examine. Its broader message is that sacred

texts require ongoing, responsible scrutiny, and that women’s voices must shape that process. By insisting on ethical evaluation and interpretive accountability, Stanton’s work continues to frame discussions of faith, equality, and authority.

Historical Context

Table of Contents

The Woman’s Bible emerged in the closing years of the nineteenth century, when the United States was urbanizing rapidly and Protestant churches wielded large cultural influence. Industrial capitalism, new communication technologies, and an expanding press shaped public debate, while common-law traditions still structured marriage and property. Universities and seminaries were largely male-run, and pulpits commonly defended separate spheres for women and men. Within this setting, the Bible was frequently invoked to justify women’s legal and civic subordination. Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s project positioned itself against these dominant institutions, insisting that scriptural authority, as commonly interpreted, underwrote many of the era’s most entrenched gender hierarchies.

Stanton’s own life frames the book’s audacity. Born in 1815 in upstate New York, she studied law informally through her father’s practice, learning how coverture erased married women’s legal identities. She helped organize the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, where the Declaration of Sentiments denounced both civil and religious constraints on women. Throughout the mid-nineteenth century she lectured widely on suffrage, divorce reform, and education. By the 1890s, after decades of advocacy and historical writing on the movement, Stanton turned directly to the scriptural roots of inequality, seeking to equip women with

arguments that challenged clerical control over interpretation and public policy.

Abolitionism and women’s rights grew together in Stanton’s early career. In 1840 she witnessed the exclusion of women at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, a moment that clarified for her how religious and moral authority could be marshaled to sustain hierarchies. American abolitionists regularly debated biblical defenses of slavery, sharpening tools of textual critique that later feminists would apply to gender. Reformers like Sarah and Angelina Grimké had already argued from scripture for equality in the 1830s. The Woman’s Bible thus stood in a lineage of activist exegesis that treated the Bible not as an untouchable monument, but as a contested text within living social struggles.

The immediate post–Civil War period altered the political landscape. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments expanded male suffrage while leaving women outside the franchise, provoking a split between the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association. The former, with Stanton prominent, pursued a broad platform that included critiques of church power. This strand of the movement did not merely ask for votes; it questioned the religious ideas that rationalized women’s legal disabilities. Decades later, The Woman’s Bible offered a systematic statement of that critique, connecting scriptural readings to inequalities in marriage, property, and citizenship.

In the 1890s, anti-suffrage campaigns leaned heavily on biblical texts. Sermons and pamphlets cited Genesis and the

Pauline epistles to defend female submission, sanctify domestic roles, and oppose women voting or preaching. The Woman's Bible addressed precisely these passages. It highlighted inconsistencies among translations and interpretations, pointed to cultural contexts behind ancient laws, and emphasized stories of authoritative women in the Bible. By assembling alternative readings, Stanton and her collaborators aimed to neutralize religious arguments deployed in legislatures, newspapers, and public meetings, where the Bible often functioned as a final word against women's claims.

The book appeared amid fierce debates over biblical authority. Late nineteenth-century "higher criticism," influenced by German scholarship, treated scripture historically, analyzing sources and dating texts. In the United States these methods triggered church trials and denominational rifts, including the 1893 heresy case of Charles A. Briggs in the Presbyterian Church. New English-language revisions of the Bible circulated widely. These currents opened space for laypeople to question inherited interpretations. The Woman's Bible drew on this ferment, bringing historical-critical questions into popular discourse and urging women to read actively rather than defer to clerical pronouncements.

Expanding educational opportunities strengthened the project's audience. Women's colleges founded from the 1860s onward trained increasing numbers of women in languages, history, and philosophy. Female seminaries and denominational schools nurtured Bible study, missionary work, and public speaking. Women also entered the pulpit in

liberal denominations such as Universalist and Unitarian churches. The rising club movement fostered study circles where texts were dissected with modern tools. In this context, Stanton’s call for women to interpret scripture themselves resonated with a generation accustomed to intellectual inquiry and eager to test authorities once shielded from debate.

Print and publicity transformed reform. The spread of the telegraph, railroads, the Linotype, and mass-circulation newspapers allowed books and controversies to travel quickly. Lecture circuits brought speakers to towns across the country, while syndicated columns amplified polemics. The Woman’s Bible, published in two parts in 1895 and 1898, entered a crowded marketplace of religious commentary. Reviews, denunciations, and defenses appeared in secular and denominational presses. These technologies did not merely transmit ideas; they structured the stakes, making interpretation of the Bible a visible, rapidly moving, national argument rather than a strictly clerical affair.

The structure of The Woman’s Bible reflected its activist origins. Stanton convened a committee of collaborators to comment on passages concerning women, from Genesis to the epistles. Their work did not offer a new translation; it presented annotations and essays challenging patriarchal readings and highlighting alternative understandings. The commentary insisted that cultural customs had been mistaken for divine mandates. It urged readers to weigh historical context, editorial choices, and the power relations behind interpretation. The method aimed to democratize

biblical study, claiming a right for women to interrogate texts that had long been used to govern their lives.

The suffrage movement’s institutional realignment shaped the book’s reception. In 1890 leading organizations merged into the National American Woman Suffrage Association, which sought broader respectability and carefully managed public messaging. Many officers believed that direct attacks on traditional religion would alienate potential allies in state referenda and legislative campaigns, especially in regions where churches were central social hubs. In 1896, NAWSA formally disavowed any connection with The Woman’s Bible, reflecting a strategic choice to separate suffrage from religious controversy even at the cost of rejecting a founding leader’s project.

Criticism from clergy and religious editors was swift. Commentators accused Stanton of irreverence and ignorance of biblical languages, and some framed the book as a threat to social order. Yet the work also found readers among freethinkers, liberal Protestants, and women drawn to ethical religion rather than dogma. Public debate often centered less on exegesis than on authority: who had the right to interpret, and whether dissent from established readings endangered the nation. By forcing those questions into newspapers and lecture halls, the book revealed how deeply biblical interpretation undergirded arguments about citizenship and family.

Women’s religious activism provided an important counterpoint. The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, led for much of the period by Frances Willard, mobilized biblical language to expand women’s moral authority in public life.

The Social Gospel movement invoked scripture to address labor conditions, poverty, and urban ills. Many reformers sought empowerment through Christianity rather than against it. Stanton’s challenge thus exposed strategic divides: whether to reinterpret the Bible within church life to win reforms, or to confront scriptural authority as a root system feeding legal and cultural subordination.

Legal and economic changes formed the book’s practical horizon. Married Women’s Property Acts, passed in many states from the mid-nineteenth century onward, eroded coverture, yet custody, employment, and divorce law still constrained women’s autonomy. Industrialization drew women into factories, offices, and stores under unequal wages and limited protections. The “New Woman” of the 1890s bicycled, sought higher education, and demanded professions, stirring alarm about gender norms. The Woman’s Bible connected these material conditions to religious justifications, arguing that scriptural subordination supported inequitable statutes and workplace practices that touched daily life.

Racial politics complicated every reform. After Reconstruction’s end, southern states installed Jim Crow and curtailed Black men’s voting; Black women faced compounded exclusions. Black clubwomen organized nationally in 1896, pursuing education, anti-lynching advocacy, and community uplift, often drawing on Christian ideals of justice. At the same time, biblical texts were misused to sanction white supremacy and gender hierarchy. While The Woman’s Bible chiefly targeted sexism, its broader insistence that authority be tested rather than

assumed spoke to a period when scripture was invoked to police multiple boundaries of citizenship and personhood.

Transatlantic currents amplified the book's reach and contention. British and American debates intertwined through travel, publishing, and shared reform networks. Higher criticism had strong European roots, and British feminists confronted religiously grounded objections to women's public leadership, even as figures like Josephine Butler framed activism in Christian terms. Press reactions in Britain mirrored American divisions—some welcomed critical inquiry, while others saw it as undermining faith. The Woman's Bible circulated within this larger Anglo-American conversation about democracy, modern knowledge, and the place of scripture in civic life.

The 1890s also saw intense political campaigns in western states, where suffragists sought constitutional amendments and referenda. Leaders feared that religious controversy could jeopardize delicate coalitions with churchgoing voters and lawmakers. Whether or not the book measurably affected specific ballots, its notoriety shaped strategy: organizations emphasized patriotic, nonsectarian appeals and highlighted respectable, church-affiliated spokeswomen. The episode clarified the movement's communication priorities heading into the Progressive Era, when winning the vote required courting broad constituencies while containing internal ideological diversity.

In this landscape, The Woman's Bible functioned as both mirror and critique of its time. It reflected late nineteenth-century confidence in scholarship, mass print, and public debate, while exposing the extent to which biblical

interpretation regulated women’s status. By contesting clerical monopolies over meaning, it invited laywomen to claim intellectual and moral authority. The book did not settle theological disputes, nor did it dictate suffrage strategy. Instead, it made visible the cultural scaffolding of law and custom, insisting that democratic reform required revisiting the sacred stories that had long shaped everyday life and public power.

Author Biography

Table of Contents

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) was a leading figure in the nineteenth-century American movement for women's rights, noted for her forceful writing, strategic organizing, and wide-ranging reform agenda. She helped catalyze the first national conversation on women's political equality and civil status, championing suffrage alongside broader legal and social reforms. A gifted orator and polemicist, she framed women's subordination as both a legal problem and a philosophical question of human dignity. Her collaborations with contemporaries in abolition and women's rights, and her willingness to press controversial issues, made her both a central architect of the movement and a lightning rod within it.

Stanton's education was unusually extensive for a woman of her era. She studied at Troy Female Seminary, founded by educator Emma Willard, where she pursued a rigorous curriculum that included classical and scientific subjects. As a young adult she also read law informally, gaining insight into the statutes and practices that constrained married women's property, guardianship, and civil autonomy. Early exposure to antislavery and reform ideas shaped her worldview. A formative moment came when she attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, where women delegates were excluded; the episode sharpened her resolve to address women's rights directly.

In 1848, Stanton helped organize the Seneca Falls Convention in New York, which issued the Declaration of Sentiments, largely drafted by her. Modeling its structure on foundational American texts, the document enumerated civil and political grievances and called—controversially at the time—for women's suffrage. Stanton soon became known for persuasive speeches and legislative petitions, including addresses urging reform of New York State laws governing property, earnings, divorce, and child custody. Her advocacy linked legal change to moral and civic principles, arguing that stable society required women's equal voice in law, religion, work, and the family. Press coverage, debate, and opposition amplified her national profile.

During the 1850s and the Civil War era, Stanton worked in concert with abolitionists while continuing to press for women's rights. After the war, disputes over the Fifteenth Amendment's exclusion of women precipitated an organizational split. In 1869 she helped launch the National Woman Suffrage Association, which prioritized a federal amendment for women's voting rights and a broad reform platform. She also co-founded and edited the newspaper The Revolution (1868–1870), using it to critique legal and social barriers to women's equality. Some of her Reconstruction-era arguments employed exclusionary rhetoric that has been widely criticized, a complexity that remains central to assessments of her legacy.

Writing was central to Stanton's influence. With Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage, she co-edited the multivolume History of Woman Suffrage, begun in the

1880s, which compiled documents, speeches, and narratives that shaped public memory of the movement. Her celebrated oration Solitude of Self (1892) articulated a philosophical defense of individual autonomy, arguing that each person must be equipped for the responsibilities of citizenship. She also published essays and lectures on marriage law, education, and labor, framing “voluntary motherhood,” civil equality, and expanded opportunities as prerequisites for a just republic.

Stanton’s leadership continued as women’s organizations consolidated. In 1890, two national suffrage groups united, and she served as the first president of the resulting association. In the same decade, she undertook one of her most controversial projects, The Woman’s Bible (published in parts in 1895 and 1898), a critical commentary on biblical passages concerning women. Many suffragists feared the work would alienate supporters; the national association formally distanced itself from it. Stanton nonetheless argued that legal and political reform would be incomplete without challenging religious interpretations that sanctioned women’s subordination.

In her later years, Stanton continued to lecture and write, publishing her autobiography, Eighty Years and More (1898), which reflected on reform, friendship, and the long arc of social change. She died in 1902, nearly two decades before the Nineteenth Amendment enfranchised many American women. Her influence endures in the language of rights discourse, in the organizational strategies of advocacy movements, and in ongoing debates about the intersections of gender, race, religion, and citizenship. Revered for

initiating a national struggle for women’s equality while scrutinized for its limitations, Stanton remains a pivotal figure in understanding both the achievements and the contradictions of U.S. reform history.

The Woman's Bible

Main Table of Contents

idea of collective Jewish guilt (see, for example, the Roman Catholic declaration Nostra Aetate, 1965) and favor readings that emphasize historical context and the diversity of early Christian testimony.

57 Theophylact refers to Theophylact of Ohrid (active c. 11th–12th century), a Byzantine archbishop and biblical commentator whose Gospel commentaries were widely read in Eastern Christianity. Stanton cites him as an example of early Christian writers who judged Mary's actions and motives in their theological interpretations.

58 The Salvation Army is a Christian charitable and evangelical movement founded in mid-19th century London by William and Catherine Booth, known for organized street preaching, social work, and a quasi-military structure. Stanton uses the phrase to compare early Christian itinerant ministers — including women who preached publicly — to the visible, public evangelism for which the Salvation Army became known.

59 A hogshead is a historical unit and a large wooden cask used for storing liquids such as wine; its exact capacity varied by region and period. In the context here it conveys that the six waterpots held a very large quantity—commonly in the range of roughly 63–140 liters (about 17–37 gallons) depending on the measure used.

60 Patmos is a small Aegean island where early Christian tradition says the Apostle John was exiled; the exile is

commonly associated with the Roman emperor Domitian, who reigned circa 81–96 CE. The island is also traditionally linked to the authorship (or composition) of the book of Revelation.

61 'Seller of purple' indicates Lydia traded in expensive purple-dyed cloth, a luxury produced using costly dyes (often associated with Tyrian purple from murex shellfish). Such garments marked wealth and status in the ancient Mediterranean, and Thyatira (her native city) was known for textile production, so Lydia is commonly understood as a prosperous businesswoman and hostess.

62 This refers to an imperial edict traditionally dated to the reign of Emperor Claudius, commonly placed around AD 49, ordering the temporary expulsion of Jews from Rome. The expulsion is attested in Roman sources and is frequently cited to explain why Jewish residents such as Aquila and Priscilla left Italy in Acts.

63 Phebe (often spelled Phoebe in modern translations) is named in Romans 16:1 as "a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." Early-Christian and modern scholars commonly interpret her role as that of a deaconess or a prominent patron of the Cenchreae church; some also suggest she may have served as the carrier of Paul's letter to the Romans, though specific duties are debated.

64 Gamaliel was a leading first-century Jewish rabbi and a member (and later head) of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high

council. Christian tradition (Acts 22:3) names him as one of the teachers of Saul/Paul, so references to Paul's learning 'at the feet of Gamaliel' point to his Pharisaic schooling and grounding in Jewish law and tradition.

65 Anne Hutchinson was a 17th-century Puritan spiritual leader in the Massachusetts Bay Colony who was tried and convicted (1637) for dissenting religious views and for challenging male clerical authority; she was subsequently banished and became a noted example of early colonial limits on women’s public and religious roles.

66 Canon law is the body of ecclesiastical rules and legal principles developed by Christian churches (especially the medieval Roman Catholic Church) that regulated clerical life, sacraments, marriage, and aspects of family and property. Stanton refers to these church-made regulations to explain how ecclesiastical rules influenced later common and civil law traditions that restricted married women’s legal rights.

67 In the text Stanton refers to the "order of deaconesses," a historical church office in which women were officially appointed to perform charitable, pastoral, and instructional work (especially care of other women and children). Many Protestant denominations revived or promoted deaconesses in the 19th century as a sanctioned female role short of ordination or full clerical authority.

68 John Morley was a British writer, editor, and Liberal politician (1838–1923) known for essays and biographies. The chapter quotes him to introduce a nonconfrontational, interpretive stance toward clergy and to justify reading Revelation as a symbolic or explanatory work rather than a literal prophecy.

69 Thuban (α Draconis) is a star in the constellation Draco that served as the approximate north celestial pole star in ancient times (commonly dated to the third millennium BCE). Because it lay very near the pole then, it was used as a reference in ancient astronomy and alignments, which is why older writers call it a former “pole-star.”

70 Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667) was an English Anglican cleric and author known for devotional writings and sermons; the epigram “Ignorance is the mother of devotion” reflects his reputation for moral and theological aphorisms used in 17th-century Anglican literature.

71 The Mosaic code denotes the body of laws in the Torah traditionally ascribed to Moses (including the commandments and civil/ritual regulations in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy); critics in the book contrast its social prescriptions with later ethical interpretations and modern views on gender.

72 Helena P. Blavatsky (1831–1891) was a founder of theosophy and author of works on esotericism; the quoted view presents her critique that the Bible contains allegory