

## **“These Usurping Vain-Glorious Women:” Two Perspectives on Female Preaching and the Position of Women in Early Modern England**

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Many scholars have written on the position of women in early modern England. Women during this time were largely subordinate to men in areas of life. The Bible was seen as the ultimate authority at the time, but people used it differently to support their ideas concerning the proper role of women in society. This paper focuses on the issue of female preaching in early modern England, examining two pamphlets which deal with the subject of female preaching. The first, entitled *A Spirit Moving in Women-Preachers*, was written in 1646 by an unknown author. This pamphlet uses biblical texts to argue against female preachers. The other pamphlet, *Women Speaking Justified* was written by Margaret Fell Fox, a famous Quaker woman, in 1666. Fox argues that women should be allowed to preach and also uses the Bible to support her case. Both the anonymous author of *A Spirit Moving in Women-Preachers* and Margaret Fell Fox interpreted scripture in different ways to support their arguments. As one example, both authors discuss the story of Adam and Eve and their fall from paradise, but each author interprets the story in a way that supports his or her view of women. This paper examines women's roles in early modern England and provides a deeper understanding of why female preaching was such a polarizing issue at that time.