

Society for the Ministry of Women
(Interdenominational)

REPORT

of

A CONFERENCE

on

**Women in the Church
of To-morrow**

their contribution to

ITS THOUGHT

ITS MINISTRY

ITS UNITY

January 10th—January 12th, 1939

at Ridley Hall, Cambridge

PAMPHLET

"One principal cause of the failure of so many magnificent schemes, social, political, religious, which have followed each other, age after age, has been this: that in almost every case they have ignored the rights and powers of one half the human race, namely women."

Charles Kingsley

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FOREWORD

I have attended many meetings and conferences on the subject of the Ministry of Women in the Church of Christ, and had even begun to feel a little weary of the subject; but such weariness was dispelled by the very exceptional interest of the papers read at the Conference held in Cambridge early in this year. I was privileged to take the chair on that occasion and, as I listened to the papers and the discussion, I realised what strides the movement had made during the last few years, in the depth of understanding and the intellectual importance of those who supported it. I earnestly commend these papers to all those who are interested in the subject, on whichever side they stand.

A. MAUDE ROYDEN
February, 1939

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FIRST SESSION

THOUGHT: TRADITION AND PROGRESS

THE REV. PROF. G. D. HENDERSON, D.D., D.Litt.

I am grateful for the invitation to share your Conference on this question of Women and the Ministry which I regard as a matter of real importance for the Universal Church in its endeavour to prepare the way of the Lord, and thus have the old message of the Gospel brought home to the new world in which we find ourselves living. The proposal that women should no longer be debarred from the ministry in the full and proper sense of the word is in complete accord with the mind of Christ; with the progressive tendencies of our modern world; and with commonsense: and only pride and prejudice oppose the admission of the principle of spiritual equality and opportunity. The movement has supporters in many lands and not least in the new lands of the Foreign Mission field. Scotland is not impenetrable to the idea; witness the fact that Miss Royden's Doctorate in Divinity is from Glasgow and that my own university of Aberdeen is awarding the same to Miss Evelyn Underhill. I trust that from this Conference I shall be able to take back to Scotland much encouragement for our Fellowship of Equal Service in the Church which is affiliated with this Society; and also some suggestions which will enable us to move appreciably in a direction which we believe will strengthen the Church and help to bring in the Kingdom.

This title reminds us that, while God has revealed Himself, His truth, His sovereignty, His love, in Jesus Christ, we are all limited in our powers of comprehending and appreciating, grasping and absorbing, and we differ from one another in the precise extent of our powers.

Bunyan tells us that when Christian came to the Delectable Mountains the shepherds told him that the gates of the Celestial City were visible from there through a glass. He looked; but his hand shook and he could not see plainly, yet,

we are told, he thought he saw something like the gate, and also some of the glory of the place. Theology can do no more than that. It cannot show us the fulness of Christ. Our hand shakes. As Goethe reminds us, even the Moslem ninety-nine names for God say practically nothing. Our idea of God at the best retains many of the shortcomings of anthropomorphism. We may rise beyond the Genesis picture of God walking in the Garden, coming down to see Babel, smelling the sweet savour of Noah's sacrifice; but at the best we make God in our own image. J. M. Barrie suggests that to a little child God has a face very like its mother's; and here the child is father to the man. And Prof. A. E. Taylor, one of our best philosophers to-day, says: "Since we who have fashioned language are men, the only language we can use or understand is necessarily anthropomorphic, no matter what its reference may be. We can see nothing outside ourselves; except through a human medium." Let me only add a reminder that when Jesus spoke of God in parables he could only indicate the direction which our thoughts should take, by constant use of the expression "how much more, how much more." There is always something "which into words no virtue can digest."

Our theology, such as it is, is an attempted rationalisation of experience; a feeble response to Revelation. The theology of St. Paul is what we would expect of one who had been Saul. Why does Augustine's theology differ so radically from that of Pelagius? Because the two men lived in different worlds though at the same date. It is not a question of being right or wrong so much as another case of the blind men of Hindustan who went to see the elephant. It is not so much what God is, as what we have been able to observe with the eyes provided for us under God by nature and experience. Revelation is affected for good or ill by the medium.

Let me remind you how, at the beginning of the 3rd century, Tertullian, a Latin-writing lawyer, took Greek metaphysical speculative thought, the Christian theology of his day, and forced it into lawyer's Latin. That has affected western theology ever since. Some centuries later the Universal Church split into two, and since then East has been East and West has been West. We scarcely give a thought to Byzantine civilization now; and yet Christianity was

eastern in origin and cannot possibly be understood in its fulness merely by the west. We may apply this further by remembering how northern and southern Europe lost touch with one another at the Reformation, each allowing its own experience to lead it to make a special emphasis at no small sacrifice. Think how few of those who study philosophy in this country to-day take any notice of Indian Philosophy. The fulness of truth is elusive and does not come to this one or to that. Everyone must contribute, and we must not overlook the contribution of any one.

We all recognise the benefits of Nationalism. The Reformation encouraged individuality, the development of national types, national languages, national credal expression; encouraged different classes of people to express themselves by the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and by letting lay opinion be educated and brought to utterance. We know that the appearance of different sects, while introducing the undesirable features which we sum up in the word sectarianism, the faults of the cliché and the proverb, also provided seedbeds where ideas that would otherwise have been crushed out of existence could peacefully develop their full beauty and glory.

All these illustrations I am offering (at the risk of some confusion, perhaps) by way of saying that the fulness of Christ is not perceived by this or that church or school of theology or sect or class, and that if the Word is not merely to be revealed but also to be understood, then we must help one another to understand it. The centuries must help one another; the East and the West must help one another; the Anglican and the Presbyterian and the Baptist must help one another; the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the old and the young must help one another. The theology of to-day ought to be the voice, not just of the experience of a few, or of this kind or of that kind. It should be the voice of the experience of the Church, East and West, young and old, and so on.

Shall we not then agree that a special contribution to theology may be demanded from women, and that women may reasonably expect their contribution to be welcomed. If Christ is ever to be understood in his fulness, women must take their share in the work of self-expression, in bringing their experience to bear upon theological problems, assisting

the progress of scientific thought in this most important department, and having opportunities to give their message to all.

There is plenty to do. Take the teaching of Jesus. John Knox declared to Mary Queen of Scots that "the Word of God is plain in itself and if there appear any obscurity in one place the Holy Ghost who is never contrarious to Himself, explains the same more clearly in other places, so that there can remain no doubt but unto such as obstinately remain ignorant." That was a natural view at a time when the Bible had only just been rediscovered, and when new and exciting messages spoke clearly from every page of Gospel and Epistle. But did they grasp the Teaching of Jesus in those enlightened days? It was not so easy as it looked. Did it not take hundreds of years to teach Christians that slavery was contrary to the mind of Christ? Whole sections of what now appears to us obviously, manifestly, the Will of God were long invisible, incredible to the most pious and faithful followers of the Lord. Take for example the idea of service which one might almost say dominates the Church to-day. That is a modern deduction and inference and interpretation from the reading of the Bible. It stares us in the face from the pages of Scripture, but we do not find it animating the mediaeval Church. Then the salvation of one's own soul was the aim. Almsgiving was a good work and helped to save one's own soul. Men often read into Scripture as much as they read out of it. They only saw what they had eyes to see. It takes much education by experience to enable us to interpret with any fulness. Scripture must be submitted to investigation in the light of individual experience, the experience of different centuries, the experience of new times. It will yield to us what we are capable of learning from it. There is much yet to be discovered about the teaching of Jesus; we do not understand him yet.

Or the person of Christ. How differently different ages have thought of Him. Contrast the woe-begone, misery-crowned figures of mediaeval crucifixions with the Jesus of History according to Dr. Glover. Niebuhr in one of his latest books says: "Ignatius Loyola was a warrior and a monk and his Christ was a combination of a warrior and a monk. Francis of Assisi was a pure ascetic, and his Christ was a pure monk. Gregory VII was a Caesar and a Pope and his Christ

was half Caesar and half Pope." We may add that the Jesus of the three synoptic gospels is scarcely the Jesus of John or Paul or Hebrews. The Jesus described by Tolstoy and Nietzsche and Wagner is someone quite different from Him Whom we find discussed in Thomas Aquinas and Schleiermacher and Troeltsch. Every type has something to tell us about Christ which only they could discover. And along with others we certainly want women to help; to help the world to understand Christ in His divine and human reality.

No one can question that women would be able to look at theological problems from a special point of view. We have seen that it is in the light of special experience that the theologians have always spoken. Women have not indeed been without influence upon theology even as things are. Their influence has been indirect, but it has been real. For even a theologian has a mother, and the share of Monnica in the formation of the theology of Augustine, the share of Luther's mother in producing his Weltanschauung, can have been by no means negligible. But we want direct influence also. The indirect is not enough. Such limited opportunity and expectation are neither fair to the world nor to women.

Women would be able to make a contribution of value to the study of Theology. No one could doubt the ability of women to do the necessary intellectual work. Women have repeatedly taken theological degrees with distinction. There is no department of theological research which should present any difficulties to them. Several names of outstanding scholars and writers in religious thought, New Testament study and so on, will occur to persons present.

And in spite of lack of encouragement and opportunity on the more scholastic and scholarly side, women have often proved themselves leaders in the realm of religious thought, and inspiring guides in practical religion. I have had occasion to examine the work of Madame Bourignon and of Madame Guyon of quietist tendency. There are more famous examples such as St. Teresa or Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Siena and Catherine of Genoa, among the mystics; Fanny Henshaw and May Drummond among the Quakers; and plenty of others in every century who had personality, originality, the gift of spiritual insight, the power of spiritual leadership. Given opportunity there is no problem of theology upon which women might not be able to shed new light.

It is impossible to state what the contribution of women would be, or in connection with which particular doctrine we might expect them to achieve the most important advances. Those who are unsympathetic to the idea of Women in the Ministry would sometimes seem to wish everything of this sort plainly detailed beforehand and clearly proved before they will agree to the attempt being made. But obviously much must be left to experiment and experience. That is how we work in every other department. When the medical profession had been opened to women it was left to experience to prove which special lines would appeal most to them and would best draw out their abilities. As to the work of the ministry the same holds good. It is so wide in range that no one is fit to attempt every part of it with success. There will be parts of the work more attractive and more suitable for women, as there are at present for men of different types and qualifications and interests. And in the world of religious thought we need think of nothing save of opening the door of opportunity, giving the fullest chances of special training, and gladly welcoming the results. Some doctrines of Christianity have received much more attention than others in the past, or have had special interest for one age rather than another. The early Church made remarkably little of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and showed little interest in the matter of the Atonement. We must take what we can get. We must leave it to experience to reveal what women may be able to do for Christ in the realm of thought, satisfied from our knowledge of the spiritual gifts of women, that they will be able to do something; something of value.

It is of particular importance that this kind of work should be attempted in our day. Women are now in prominent places in most departments of thought and activity, in the various professions and in public life, facing serious problems for the community. It is specially desirable in these circumstances that representatives of this type of woman apply themselves to the problems which face religion and the Church in our own day. This is necessary to supplement what women will be working out in connection with social and educational problems. The thing must not be allowed to go one-sided, as it will otherwise certainly do.

Another small point I should like to put. I don't believe much can be accomplished by the type of theologian

or religious thinker or writer who is not, or has not been, in touch with the work of the active ministry. The purely academic teacher of religion or theology is by no means the ideal. Women will never be able to make their full contribution in theology till they have experience of the practical ministry. Nor will the expression of their contribution be adequate and complete unless it is possible for them to test and to apply it in preaching. Their message must be capable of being so set forth as to bring Christ nearer to the human soul.

The Church has often adapted itself to great world changes. It adapted itself to Galileo, though it took a long time to do it. It has adapted itself to Darwin, and to the Higher Criticism. It adapted itself to the invention of printing, which meant that it was no longer confined to approaching souls through ritual and ceremony and art but had a new means of access by the reason. Surely it might be persuaded, for its own sake, in these days when perhaps the very existence of Christianity is more at stake than at any period since the days of the Roman Empire, to adapt itself: to adapt itself to the world in which we actually live; a world which needs Christ and must have Christ conveyed to it as the saviour for to-day; to adapt itself now to a world in which women have proved their ability to contribute to the well-being of humanity through educated service as teachers, musicians, artists, doctors, lawyers, novelists, journalists, scholars, scientists, and so on. The Church has always meant so much to women and women have always meant so much to the Church, that it is but commonsense to afford them every possible opportunity of helping the world to do what, without them it has attempted with so little success in two thousand years; to understand Christ.

THE REV. MARIANNE TURNER, B.A., DSS.

To speak authoritatively about women's contribution to Christian thought of tomorrow would only be possible for one possessing prophetic insight and foresight—insight to grasp the essentials, and to discern the meaning and value of the movements of history—and foresight to see where the present trend of thought is leading. As I have no claim to the prophetic gift I wonder at my temerity in standing here before you. For I can only speak as one of the least among

students of theology. I cannot do more than suggest to you that in the movement of religious thought, there seem to be, in the stream of new life which originated with Christianity, one or two currents which have persisted in the thought and action of Christian women down the ages; and then to try to show their relevance to the spiritual needs of our generation. One cannot predict what contribution women will make to Christian thought in the future, but it is safe to say that this will depend to a profound extent upon the manner in which the women of today respond to the opportunities of the present critical period in the life of the Christian Church.

There is no need to emphasize the importance of right thinking in the life of the Church, but we may well remind ourselves that behind all Christian philosophy lies religious experience. And forasmuch as all Christian experience is related to the concrete fact of the Incarnation expressed in the Person of Christ, so Christian thinking is concrete and personal rather than abstract. Perhaps it is just because of this that it is important for women to make their contribution. For women are nothing if not personal, practical, objective—and abstract thinking is rare among them. Women can, and ought to, make their contribution to the doctrine of the Person of Christ. But I feel that I must go further and say that they have made a contribution already. Therefore I ask you to go back in time to the women of the New Testament and to consider whether there is not something very significant in the words and actions of the women who move about in the Gospel pages.

Let us look at them collectively—and see how they seem to challenge women of all ages to continue the work which was unexpectedly committed to them, of helping to unfold the Mystery of God. To the Gospel women was entrusted a special privilege. Beginning with His Mother, our Lord allowed them a special and intimate ministry of Love. Martha is not afraid to rebuke Him, mothers are not afraid of boring Him, or of asking special privileges for their children. And it seems that this intimate contact with His Person was allowed by our Lord for a deliberate purpose—that by their sympathetic and intelligent understanding they might help to reveal the meaning and purpose of His Life and Death for all generations. He Himself used their intellects as well as those of the Twelve to throw into relief the Divine truths

which He came to teach. But what is of more importance is the intimate connection of the Gospel women with the Passion. "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also" was true in some degree of all the women disciples. Their following to the Cross is because they feel they must share His sufferings and minister what comfort they may. So they help to interpret for us the significance of the Passion. And because they were with Him in death, so they were the first witnesses of the great Christian truth that the Cross is the gateway to the Resurrection life.

Christian women of successive generations took their cue from the women of the Gospel. I would first direct your attention to Catherine of Genoa. I choose her first because she, as a woman, made a very definite, some say the greatest, contribution to Christian thought. You will remember her sudden conversion—after which she was led through even greater experiences of love for our Lord, to the development of her original doctrine of Purgatory—as a voluntary plunge of the soul into suffering here and now through the purifying disciplines of life. Catherine's doctrine is fully worked out, as you know, in Baron von Hugel's classic work on Mystical Religion.

Earlier in time by a century was that wonderful English woman, Julian of Norwich, who claims a place among original thinkers. She had prayed for a share in the sufferings of our Lord, asking that she might realize His Passion as though she were standing at the foot of the Cross. As you know, a Revelation of Love was made to her in sixteen "showings." Thereafter, her great desire was to share this great religious experience with "mine even Christians" and she spent her life pondering its meaning. Julian's meditation on the Passion led her to an intimate understanding of the Person of Christ. Her description of Him as "full homely" is unique, as also her delightful humour and common-sense while treating of such a high theme as the Active Love of God.

Contemporary with Julian is Catherine of Siena, in whom again we have a woman whose spiritual understanding of the Passion has had far reaching effect upon Christian thought. Catherine is one of the pioneers of vicarious suffering—one soul for another—and of vicarious reparation for sin. "Lord, I am fain to offer my body in sacrifice to

bear all sins." Thus she identified herself with our Lord's act of Redemption.

Lastly, I must mention Theresa, the 16th century religious genius of Spain, among the creative spirits among Christian women. In her inspiring saying "His Majesty exceedingly loveth the courageous soul" is to be found the main spring of her life and thought. Her religious experience led her, also, to an understanding of suffering as a positive work for God. "Lord, either to suffer or die is all I ask of Thee." As you know, she devoted her life to the reform of the Carmelite order.

In looking back upon outstanding Christian women of the past, we realize, of course, that they were limited by the social framework of their age. But it is significant that in spite of social inferiority they have continuously proved their spiritual equality with men.

I have only mentioned four outstanding personalities who contributed to Christian thought, but one could, of course, trace them down to the present day. As an English-woman of whom we are rightly proud, I must mention the work of Evelyn Underhill, whose contribution to Christian thought will surely be of permanent value.

While it is true that the contribution of women through the ages seems to centre round the interpretation of the Passion—yet it is only as the gateway to Eternal Life. If the emphasis, in such dedicated lives as these, is on suffering, yet it is positive, creative suffering, through which they radiated the joy and vigour of an active life of service. Perhaps when one thinks about it, it seems right that women should make a contribution of this nature, though I do not for one moment wish to limit them to this field of thought. But in spiritual matters we should perhaps expect that they would contribute a special power of suffering for the sake of new life, as well as intuitive understanding and mother wit.

Passing from this very inadequate sketch of the thought of Christian women of genius in the passage of time, may we now consider whether the past has relevance to the needs and opportunities of our own day. For I think that it is obvious that the future contribution of women cannot be considered apart from the present. Now it seems to me that no one who tried to keep abreast with current Christian thought, can fail to be impressed by the fact that leaders in all schools of

thought are constantly reiterating as a matter of paramount importance the need for us to re-learn the Christian doctrine of atonement and redemption. Take one instance; the fine series of books issued during the last year or more by the S.C.M. for the Religious Book Club. Have you noticed how many of the writers lead up to the doctrine of the Cross in their last chapter, as the final solution of their problems? In the book by Professor Grensted, last chapter contains these words:—"The Christian message is that the way of life is also the way of the Cross. and though it is an essential part of the Christian Gospel that what was done upon the Cross was done for us by the direct intervention of God Himself in the affairs of human life, it is equally essential to it to declare that it is also the act of God in us, so that the way of the Cross is our way too." (This Business of Living. p. 181.) Or take the reports of either of the great conferences of 1937, or of the Church Congress of 1938, and you will find the majority of speakers repeatedly emphasizing the doctrine of redemption through suffering. Or take theologians: Dr. Edwyn Bevan concludes a book on the History of Christian Thought with these words:—"The dominant issues of Christian thought for the next generation seem likely to be the theology of redemption, and the theology of the Church as the society of the redeemed. What is certain is that it will have the Cross at its heart: for experience on every side endorses the truth it proclaims, that only out of great tribulation, and through death and resurrection, can men enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Or take that remarkable book by Dr. Phythian Adams, "The Fullness of Israel," and read again the last chapter called "Servitude," and think out, in their context, these pregnant words:—"Once again the Son of Man has set His face towards Jerusalem, but now He summons His members to fill up with Him there that which is still lacking in His sufferings. This it is, far more than the menace of the world, which constitutes the crisis of our age: and the question immediately pressing upon the Church is not so much whether she will respond ardently to that summons, as whether she will even hear it." In the context of thoughts such as these there is surely no need to apologize for asking whether the women of the Gospel are not challenging the women of today to identify themselves with the Passion of our Lord, going with Him to Calvary, and so to a new and eternal quality of life.

Let us consider women's contribution to theology. It is true that, so far, they have not contributed greatly, but though they lacked opportunity in the past, that is not the case today. As one who graduated recently in theology from this University I think I may say from experience that there is nothing to prevent women who are willing to undergo the discipline of theological training from going as far as men. Probably many of you will have heard of the blind student of Newnham College, who, coming up in 1935 went down last year with three 'Firsts' to her credit. So far as Cambridge is concerned I do not think that there is any justification for the complaint that women have not the same chance of doing original work in theology as men have. My own experience as a student is that sex simply doesn't count in the scientific pursuit of theological truth. But—and here there is a weakness—the number of women willing to undergo such training at a university is lamentably small. I know of course that this is conditioned by many practical considerations—one of them being the lack of full status for women in the Ministry. But there is no doubt that women who wish to teach Divinity, or to serve the Church directly, do not realize as they should the importance of taking the maximum rather than the minimum theological training. If more women entered the universities to read theology there would be greater opportunity for them to be found in the fields of research, for the universities are quick to discern original thinkers, and to give them their chance of making a definite contribution.

But apart from academic research I feel that women have quite as important a field of work in interpreting the findings of scholarship for the laity. There is probably a far greater need of books which interpret Biblical truths simply and attractively than for the large number of devotional books which are published, some of which show lack of scholarship. I think women's power of interpretation could, and ought to, make a valuable contribution in this way, not only in literature, but in teaching and discussion in everyday life, so that we may help Christians and sceptics, as well as those who never use their minds at all, to think more vigorously, accurately, and self-consciously on these matters. My late revered supervisor in this University, Sir Edwyn Hoskyns, was never weary of warning his students that we

must face the discipline imposed upon us by the language of the Bible, and study the great Biblical words as they move through the pages of Old and New Testament, wrestling with them and refusing to let them go until they had delivered up their secret. To quote his words from some notes:— "the Church requires us to re-learn the meaning of some of the commonest words in our language," and again:— "the language of the Bible is the language of men, stamped with the truth of God."

May I illustrate this teaching with one great Biblical word, the word "neighbour." To quote Sir Edwyn again:— "the neighbour in the Bible is the man who is not your friend, does not understand you, is outside your horizon, does not believe what you believe, is so much your opposite that at certain moments in the Bible the synonym for the word 'neighbour' is 'other' . . . he that loveth an Other hath fulfilled the Law." Vivid words these, that will show even the dullest student that from the story of Cain and Abel to the close of the New Testament there is bound up with the word "neighbour" (whose original meaning is one who is near) a contradiction. It implies both near and far, and only the grace of God can overcome the natural friction which is common to neighbours. Thus Christian neighbourliness is one of the roads to the Cross. Women's sympathies, especially, need educating, for in their very depth is the danger lest they run in channels too narrow for Christianity. But the chief point is that Biblical theology and ethics must go hand in hand. Together they are entirely adequate for present day needs. When, in the Anglican Church, the laity complain of getting ethics without theology from the pulpits, their complaint is entirely justified. I agree, therefore, with Professor Henderson when he suggests that theologians must and should preach, and so relate their learning to the common problems of daily life and I feel this strongly in relation to women, many of whom have a real prophetic gift and with training could make a definite contribution to the Ministry of the Word. But it is not only in the pulpit; even more in the give and take of everyday life are great thoughts disseminated, and this so largely depends upon women. Therefore I urge the importance of theological truth, and its interpretation, through the sympathetic and versatile minds of women, into the context and language of our people. It does, and will,

require effort and sacrifice, but it is another way of self-giving which leads to eternal life.

Finally, let us consider the official ministry of women in the Church. We have a sub-title on the programme of this session—Tradition and Progress—and as the tension which exists between Tradition and Progress is of very vital importance in the women's movement, it is important that we should understand it. Religious Tradition, in Dr. Temple's words, represents "the deposit of innumerable individual apprehensions." Now for as much as each of these individual apprehensions is the result of a religious experience, we cannot wonder at the sacredness of the tradition, nor at the authority which it wields, not again at its tendency to be conservative. But, tradition must keep fluid enough to discard what is outworn, and to be developed by fresh individual apprehensions as time moves on. If it clings to outworn forms it is like Pharasaism, and yet each new individual experience must be tested and tried before it is adopted by the body as a whole. So we see in history, prophets and reformers dying long before the full significance of their message is apprehended. The more radical the reform, the more penetrating the vision, the greater the time lag. So those who see visions and dream dreams are always most aware of the tension and inclined to revile the tradition. Yet although the tradition appears to the reformer to be static, history proves that it is really cumulative—a slow, deep movement is continuously in being as the full stream moves on, leaving behind those things that have ceased to keep time with its rhythm, and thus hamper its progress, and drawing in and slowing down to its own movement the winged apprehensions of prophets and seers.

This is only another way of saying that individual Christians look and leap at the same time, but tradition bids the Church look before it leaps. Therefore, we must keep our sense of perspective true and clear in relation to the movement for equality of function and status between the sexes in the Church. We are now experiencing a time-lag, and it is of great importance that it should be rightly used. It is, too, a question of ends and means—and W. Aldous Huxley has reminded us forcibly in his recent book that "the means employed inevitably determine the nature of the result achieved—and however good the end aimed at may be—its

goodness is powerless to counteract the effects of bad means." In other words bad means distort good ends. So we are faced with a problem. Perhaps you will forgive me if I utter a gentle warning against a tendency to adopt a definitely sub-Christian attitude to the Church. I refer to the attitude of mind in which women would withhold their services from the Churches on the ground of insufficient scope and opportunity. There are, it seems, women who would serve directly in their Church if full status and function were allowed to them, but who stand aside and serve in other spheres because it is denied. The Church is the Body of Christ, the Gospel teaching stands for all time, and those who said "to what purpose is this waste" when a woman lavishly anointed His earthly body, were rebuked. I do not deny that there are many practical considerations that affect individual cases. I am speaking of the attitude as a whole. For the Church in her hour of crisis needs her women—the most highly talented and trained, as well as the least. She needs them all. And I am one of those who, personally, think there is no doubt that by serving loyally and unstintingly in whatever capacity is allowed to us by the present leaders of the Churches, we pave the way for the fuller recognition which, if the women's movement is guided by the Spirit, is sure to come.

University women are rarely found in the ranks of women Churchworkers—I appeal to them to stoop, if they have Vision and Courage, and offer their lives in the service of the Church at home or abroad. It may be, in losing they will gain, and anyhow history, as I have tried to indicate, shows that it is by identifying themselves with the self-emptying of our Lord that women have nobly served in the past and have brought new life to the Church. And what might not be accomplished if every woman who could do so would offer the riches of her mind to the service of the Church. Indeed there is great need, so that "the word of the Lord may run and be glorified."

Let us therefore face our problem in terms of Eternity rather than in terms of Time. If so we shall not chafe unduly at the restraints imposed upon us by time.

Let my final words be those of the German pastor who writes from prison:—"Only in these days have I realised how much it is taken as a matter of course, where it is written of the imprisonment of St. Paul in Caesarea, 'But after two

years . . . ' Two years—just as if it were nothing! Therefore it will be nothing. At any rate the Message is free—no bars can stop it—nothing can stop it!"

THE PUBLIC MEETING

As both Mrs. Corbett Ashby and Dr. Herbert Gray spoke from notes only it has been impossible to reproduce their speeches in full. The following is the report which appeared in the Cambridge Daily News.

MRS. CORBETT ASHBY, LL.D., expressed the view that it was difficult to know how best to keep up the standard of spiritual values in the world to-day. The enormous mass of human misery, the degradation of everyday standards and of international relations was making more and more claims on people's thought and energy.

"The greatest crisis in the world to-day is a challenge to human values and human personality," she said. "All the tyrannies, the concentration camps, the throwing out of helpless people for reasons over which they have no control, all the standardisation of education is a challenge to the value of human personality. We should give to the personality of every human being the greatest opportunity of freedom for development."

Women could play their special part because, in a sense, their experience of faith and the human personality was much more in their own individual experience. She believed that woman's job to-day was to show that the most valuable thing in the world was this liberty for the human soul, liberty of speech and thought, liberty to give service willingly and freely, and to fight that terrible tyranny which was a consequence of the distortion of science to evil ends.

"If you say a woman is not qualified you are putting up a definite limitation to women's work in the world and act against her willingness to serve not only in this special department but in other departments as well. Do we ordinary men and women realise how near the challenge has come to all the spiritual values which centuries of thought and effort have built up? It is the frontiers of the human mind and the outposts of spiritual thought that are being challenged to-day."

DR. A. HERBERT GRAY, M.A., D.D., began by expressing his belief that men and women are different throughout.

"I think that in some respects women are superior to men," he said, "They are more practical; they live closer to reality. For the most effective action by mankind we need co-operation of men and women, who were made by God to co-operate with one another. It is by that co-operation in all fields of human activity that we shall achieve our highest results.

"As a race I do not think we know much about them yet. I am quite sure we shall never, as a race, reach our most effective life until we have discovered the secret of effective co-operation as men and women.

"I, personally," he said, "am filled with shame that the last fortress to yield in this matter is one which should never have been a fortress at all. Our Lord is the first religious teacher Who treated all women as persons of inexpressible value. For them to be debarred is an humiliating shame for all members of the Church of Christ."

Speaking of the "strange sense that in some way women are inferior," Dr. Gray said that many men were more than half afraid of highly educated and intellectual women. They liked submissive women. In particular a great many men disliked being convinced by a woman. People were afraid that women would be too emotional and sentimental, and men, who were very emotional, disliked having their feelings assailed in public.

"I am sure nothing will dissipate these suspicions except experience," he said. "Women doctors have dissipated the prejudice which was against them and I am sure similar experience in the Church would dissipate the mysterious something which now blocks progress."

Dr. Gray said he thought a movement was on foot towards a healthier relationship between the sexes, and it was as that movement progressed that they would find the movement for women in the ministry achieving the success which was so sadly needed in the world. Just as the divisions seemed to become more regrettable because of the urgency of the situation, so did it seem to him to be dreadful that they should be hampered by denying to a large proportion of their membership liberty to exercise the gifts God had given them.

SECOND SESSION

THE MINISTRY: THE WORD AND SACRAMENTS

THE REV. C. B. HODSON, M.A.

I understand that I am asked to represent to you an Anglo-Catholic opinion. Alas! I do not claim to represent the opinion of many Anglo-Catholics, but if we are to wear labels, that seems to be the one for me. I say this to ask for your forbearance if I use the kind of language which such persons use, and to make it clear that I do not use it with the intention of annoying those who think and speak otherwise, but in order to make myself clearly understood by those who share my theological position, but are for the most part opposed to the ministry of women.

My friends tell me that we are proposing to throw over ancient tradition. Yes, we are; and it needs courage. But consider how slow progress has been; only in our life-time have women won the entry to the medical and legal professions, and the right to vote and sit in Parliament, and after what desperate struggles! How unseemly we thought their behaviour! How impossible their methods! But they were right. I have lately been reading an account of the tortures and martyrdoms endured by Mrs. Pankhurst and her followers. Their methods are not seemly for a spiritual cause, but perhaps they will be the less required because those pioneers have won so much and blazed a trail for us. The modern emancipation of women, and greater extension of educational facilities, have opened the eyes of this generation to see the mental capacity of women.

We have always known the spiritual capacity of women. You will think of your favourite examples; among those who come to my mind are names like Catherine of Siena, whose sex did not deter her from kneeling on the scaffold and receiving into her hands the severed head of Nicola Tuldo, who asked this last service of the one who had won him to repentance. Catherine, the counsellor of Popes, or the still more famous St. Teresa, or to take English examples, Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, who ruled her monastery with such success that five bishops were taken from it; Lady Margaret Beaufort, who founded two colleges at Cambridge (Christ's

and St. John's), these and many others are examples from the past which shew that even then there were women of great spiritual power and capacity for leadership. Now we know also that they have intelligence and wit worthy to be matched against the finest masculine brains.

It follows inevitably that they must receive opportunity and authority to make full use of the powers with which God has endowed them.

We clergy are bound by our ordination vows to be wholesome examples to the flock of Christ. Yet we believe that men and women are complementary the one to the other, that both are needed to make perfect humanity. Therefore the flock needs the example of holy women as well as holy men. Theology recognises in Christ the perfection of both sexes, the woman's tenderness with the man's strength; we do not usually find the same perfection in His disciples.

We often forget that the sacred Ministry is a ministry, a service; we do not commonly find women considered unsuitable for other, e.g. domestic, forms of service. For military service perhaps they are physically less suited than men; that this physical difference is not a hindrance to the sacred Ministry is shewn by their endurance in missionary and many other fields of service.

The present position in the Church of England is illogical. Women are allowed to give addresses, often to a mixed congregation, but seldom to preach, and they are subjected to absurd restrictions, e.g. they are not allowed to use the pulpit.

The pulpit makes preaching or speaking easier,

1. By promoting audibility.
2. By making it easier to conceal notes.
3. It is the place from which pronouncements with authority are expected. Denial of the pulpit means in effect, "It is only a woman, we are not sure if she ought to be here, so do not pay too much attention, and do not be afraid to disapprove."

There is a more serious illogicality. Teaching and pastoral work are permitted to women, with restrictions, but the ministry of the Sacrament is denied, the priesthood is forbidden. Thus opportunities are multiplied for receiving that ministrations which is less necessary, or else people are led to think that it is more important to hear sermons than

to receive the Sacrament. I need not tell you that the contrary is the Anglo-Catholic view. We emphasise the teaching of the catechism that the Holy Communion is generally necessary to salvation; sermons are desirable, not necessary. So the Church permits women, under limitations, to perform unnecessary services, but prohibits them from providing that which we hold to be a necessity.

What is there in sex which makes it an impediment to the celebration of the Holy Communion, from performing the chief priestly function? "It has never been done."

True, but I think my earlier remarks gave a sufficient reason for that. Until the modern emancipation of women it was never even thought of. The progress of women in the world is due to Christ, and to Him only. I think we are all agreed about that. Have they then now reached the limit of their ascent to freedom?

Think again. What was the holiest vocation that ever human being had? What was the supreme privilege of any human being? Surely to be, as we call her, Mother of God, or more accurately, Mother of Him Who is God. If a woman is worthy of that dignity, surpassing every other human dignity, why is she unworthy to be an archbishop? Millions of Christians pray daily, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." What do they mean? One of the world's masterpieces, the Sistine Madonna of Raphael, is known to all by its numerous reproductions. Many years ago I remember a woman telling me her impression of the original. "It seemed," she said, "that she was giving her Son to the world." It is true. Mary gave her Son to the world, that He might be its Saviour. That was her vocation. And it is my vocation, as of countless priests down the ages, to feed men and women at the altar with the spiritual food which is the gift of the Son of God, Who is Mary's Son. The grace of the Spiritual food which priests distribute comes from Christ. Mary's surrender made His gift possible. The vocation of Mary is higher than the priestly vocation. If a woman is capable of receiving the greater, why in the name of common sense is she incapable of receiving the less?

Another priestly function denied to women is absolution. It is grossly unfair to demand of women, as the price of assurance of forgiveness, something that is not required of men,

viz., that they should lay bare their souls to the opposite sex. In my limited experience I know of no bad result, but I believe that many find it an insurmountable obstacle, and it is notorious that it gives the world a handle against the Church. We are all familiar with the unseemly caricature which represents the woman penitent prostrate at the feet of the proud priest.

I pray that the Church of England may soon learn her vocation to give a lead to the world, or rather, following some of our Free Church brothers, give a lead to the Catholic portion of the divided Church, in this matter.

The objection is made at once: "By so doing we should put off re-union with Rome. In a big thing like this we cannot act alone."

I give place to no one in my longing for re-union with Rome, and have great admiration for Rome at her best, as seen, for example, in the life of the Curé d'Ars, but I think we can carry that argument of waiting for Rome too far. Let me remind you that it is an Article of Faith with the Church of England that "Rome hath erred;" if we wait for her to repent we may wait too long. But, chiefly, if a thing is right, we who have seen it to be so cannot wait to act upon it because others have not yet got so far in apprehension of the truth. If we all follow Truth as we see it, we must all meet some day, though some may arrive before others. The question is not, Are women's Orders expedient? but, Are they right? If they are right, nothing, not even the fear of enhancing present differences, should stand in the way. Incidentally, it may be noted that dis-union came to a Church entirely governed by men! It may even be for women to help Christendom back to a truer unity.

St. Paul is not usually quoted as the champion of women's rights, indeed his local regulations for a particular church are still made the cause, in many places, for the covering of women's heads in church, but St. Paul lays down to the Galatians the principle which must at last lead to equality of privilege and opportunity for women as for men. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female." The Christian Church has learnt the first two principles; Jew and Gentile are equal in the Catholic Church, there is no bondage, and no class distinction; it remains to abolish the distinction

based on sex. The mills of God grind slowly. We reach that which is in the Divine plan by slow stages. I believe that to oppose this thing now is sin; in former times it was ignorance. "The Holy Spirit shall guide you, not *has* guided you, into all the truth." Slowly through the ages women have risen to the place which our Lord has shewn that they should hold; the victory is now very near.

Another objection which I often meet is this: "We women don't want the priesthood." No, they do not. We men have taught them too well, and they have learnt their lesson. And so we come to the real obstacle,—I speak for the Church of England only. The chief obstacle to Holy Orders for women is not Rome, nor yet, as Anglo-Catholics so often think, the Bishops; the chief obstacle is the rank and file of the clergy of the Church of England.

The late Bishop Donaldson of Salisbury once said that a great measure of the opposition to women in Orders came from a spirit of trades-unionism among the clergy. I believe it is true; and I believe that by being brought to light it may be made less true, because I believe that my brother clergy are good at heart and if they understand that the sin of selfishness is at the root of their opposition they will repent. We clergy are often pitied for our hard lot, our small and diminishing incomes, and other hardships; not unjustly, may be; yet, in spite of all, the fact remains, and we know it very well, that in these distressful times we have a fairly safe job, and it is still fairly respectable, and we love it. And if women come crowding into our profession, with their high standard of duty, their power of suffering, and all those gifts for which we men are proud to worship them, then competition will be a little more keen, the job of the man priest will be a little less safe. No! away with such thoughts: thus baldly stated we cannot admit them. We desire the will of God, we desire the best candidates for the sacred ministry.

But the fact remains that we are not getting them. Bishops are reducing the standard required of ordination candidates, but still there is a shortage; and country parishes are being joined together, and they do not like it, and nothing we can do will make them like it. There are women with high qualifications ready to take up the burden of the ministry; let them come in! The call comes, not from towns and villages of Britain only, but from every country where Christian

Missions are planted; the call for more clergy, for a resident priest in every centre.

God is giving His vocation to women. How long must we be found fighting against God?

THE REV. CONSTANCE COLTMAN, M.A., B.D.

We have so often heard the ministry of women adduced as an obstacle to Reunion that it warmed the very cockles of the hearts of some of us to listen to Mr. Gibson's reminder that it may also serve as a link uniting those of differing communion in a common purpose and a common endeavour. Truth is the great unifier and the principles for which we stand are a source of strength and not of weakness to all who profess them. As Mrs. Corbett Ashby reminded us last night, our cause is based on those fundamental spiritual values which are being so fiercely assailed to-day but on the preservation and ultimate triumph of which depends, not merely the survival of the Christian Church, but of all that makes human life worth while. It is an illustration of this unifying character of our Society that to-day I, a Free Church woman minister, am addressing an audience predominantly Anglican.

There have always been women who proclaimed the word of God as they understood it. The woman preacher—only in earlier days she was called prophetess—has existed in every religion. In the Old Testament we need only think of Miriam and Deborah. I cannot forbear reminding you that most scholars consider the Song of Deborah (Judges V) to be the earliest surviving fragment of Hebrew literature. Think of it: our Bible begins with the song of a woman (whether that bloodstained utterance is a credit to our sex is of course another matter!) But let us recall that the New Testament also opens with the word of a woman. For the Christian revelation does not begin with the first chapter of St. Mark nor even of St. John. No, the spiritual beginning of the Christian Gospel of the Incarnation is to be found in a verse of St. Luke (i. 38) in Mary's reply to Gabriel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word." All our Christian faith flows from the fountal source, from Mary's acceptance of her unique vocation.

With such a beginning it is but to be expected that in the other pages of the New Testament we should find the prophetess—the woman preacher—definitely recognised or

rather, what is more significant, taken for granted. The most striking mention is that of the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist who all followed their father's vocation as a preacher. It has naturally been in the creative, spiritually fertile periods of the Church's life that the preaching ministry of women has been most in evidence. The gift of prophecy is God-given and spirit-authenticated. "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth" and entereth the soul of man and woman alike. In the records of the pioneers of the Free Church tradition there are curiously numerous, even though usually hostile, references to women preachers among the earliest Dissenters. I must content myself with a single example from a lampoon, dated 1641—

"When women preach and cobblers pray
The fiends in hell make holiday."

I have selected this particular instance because it so happens that a hundred years after, it was precisely the prayers of a certain cobbler, William Carey by name, that begat the modern mission enterprise. At this very hour the seed he sowed at Serampore is bearing fruit, not a hundred-fold, nor even a thousandfold, but a millionfold, at that gathering in Madras which might well be styled the first World Conference of the Church of Christ at Madras. Should Christianity perish from the West, of which calamity there are many disquieting premonitory symptoms, the prayers of a cobbler have at least saved it for the East. May we dare to hope that even at this eleventh hour a really wide-spread revival of women's preaching might retrieve a desperate situation and save Christianity in the West as well as in the East.

The opportunity is so vast, the need for women's preaching of the Word is so desperately urgent, and yet so few women have so far come forward. In my own Congregational Communion the door to the ministry has been open for over twenty years, and yet hardly that number have passed through it. There is no need to recapitulate the reasons, economic, psychological and the like, for this state of affairs. But there is one special difficulty peculiar to the Free Churches. Our democratic constitution makes it easy for a very small minority to thwart the desire, even of a majority of the congregation, to call a woman to their pulpit. This

system of choosing a minister bears hardly upon the woman pioneer.

But I fear there is another more important difficulty, a very grave one. There are a growing number of young women, as well as men who no longer believe that the best way to serve God and their fellows is through the Ministry of the Church of Christ. This is a most ominous fact; that some of the best and noblest among us believe that the Church is effete and decaying. So far has she fallen from her high estate as the Body of Christ and the organ of His Spirit. But some of us have still faith in the Church and we passionately desire that women shall enter her Ministry, for their own sake, and for the sake of the Church, and of the world.

And now to turn to the ministry of women and the Sacraments. At this point I must explain very briefly what is the usual Free Church view of the Sacraments. Of course there are wide varieties of opinion amongst us—perhaps as wide as between Evangelical and Catholic in the Church of England—but very generally speaking, Free Church people do not distinguish sharply between the ministry of the Word and the ministry of the Sacraments. They regard these, not as two things, but as one. So for us the sermon partakes of the nature of a Sacrament, and the Sacraments proclaim the Incarnate Word until "He come." Also the Free Churches preserve the idea of the Agape or Love Feast. The Communion is the family meal of the Household of Faith. This accounts for the homely familiarity and the absence of awed reverence which contrasts with the Catholic Rite. All this has its bearing on the ministry of women. Free Church people are almost completely free from what is, I believe, the most fundamental objection to the opening of the Catholic priesthood to women. I refer to such questions as "ceremonial uncleanness" and a whole cycle of ideas which psychoanalysis is beginning to explore and expose, and will doubtless ultimately dissipate. This problem will have to be faced and solved by Anglican women. I have sometimes wondered whether Free Church people are not more inclined to welcome a woman presiding at the Communion than preaching from the pulpit. Since Free Church folk emphasise the aspect of the family meal it is but natural that they should find a certain fittingness in a woman sitting at the head of the table. Ruskin long ago reminded us that the very word "lady"

means "bread-giver" or "loaf-giver," and he goes on to say "A lady has claim to her title only when she is known, as her Master himself once was, in breaking of bread." (Sesame and Lillies, par. 88.) But there is a deeper reason still. If a woman was once the vehicle of the Incarnation, it is fitting that the Sacrament which is the extension of the Incarnation should be administered by a woman. "Through Mary the Word became Incarnate, and from a woman's body was wrought the flesh and blood that hung on Calvary. What more appropriate than that by the hand of a woman the Body and Blood of the Lord should be given to His people."

There are occasions when the Communion of the Sick can most suitably be administered by a woman minister. One of the Easter Communions which stands out most vividly in my own pastoral memory is one I celebrated in the home of a gravely ill, expectant mother.

I am not a Baptist, nor have I worked in the Mission Field, so I have only a very limited personal experience of the administration of "the" Sacrament, that which should have come first, the Sacrament of Adult Baptism. But, in common with, I imagine, every other woman minister, I have found christening services the most popular and appreciated part of my ministry. Here, however, I speak from a Free Church point of view. To use our own phrase, a Free Church is a "gathered" company of Christian believers, not a large territorial unit like many Anglican parishes. The church of which my husband and I are ministers has a largish membership by Congregational standards, but even so, I hardly have more than a dozen christenings in the course of a year. This means that in the majority of cases the christening service comes as the climax of months of spiritual fellowship and preparation shared between parents and minister. Here is a sphere of spiritual service for which women ministers, whether themselves actually mothers or not, are peculiarly fitted. They will tend to emphasise the personal element even in such an impersonal matter as the administration of the Sacraments.

And now, in conclusion, what of the preaching of the Word? Will women there also contribute their distinctive emphasis? Yes: I believe they will in time. At present probably most women ministers preach sermons too much fashioned on masculine models. It is hard for us to do other-

wise since we pioneers had perforce to be trained at exclusively masculine theological colleges and our minds were moulded by a masculine curriculum, imparted by men professors. But that phase will pass; and then women will bring their distinctive contribution to the interpretation of Christian theology. I suggest that the Church will never achieve an adequate theology of the Holy Spirit until both men and women, as well as both East and West, meet for its fashioning. Miss Turner has already told us how mediaeval women mystics and theologians have concentrated on the Cross. Yes, but not the Cross by itself, but the Cross linked with the Resurrection. That is, I believe, the distinctive Gospel committed to women. We who are mothers have no monopoly in suffering—what is unique in the experience of motherhood is an agony that issues not in death but in new life. So, in the spiritual realm, I believe that women should be peculiarly qualified to interpret the Passion as the gateway through which life and immortality were brought to light. Have you noticed that Our Lord explicitly committed the Gospel of the Resurrection to His women disciples? It was to Martha, that poor, harassed housewife, that Jesus spoke the words: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." It was to His women disciples that the Risen Lord first appeared, and to them He specifically entrusted the Gospel of the Resurrection: "Go, tell my disciples." For us the Cross and the Resurrection are not only facts of history: they are the revelation in time of God's fundamental way with men to all eternity. They proclaim that Love overcomes Hate; and Life triumphs over Death; they unveil to us God's deepest secrets and His only weapon for resisting evil.

These truths are common to us all, but it is for women to interpret and commend them in their own way. In Christ we are all one; there is neither male nor female. But there will always be men and women and each will make their own contribution to the Ministry both of Word and Sacraments.

THE MINISTRY (continued): PASTORAL WORK

THE REV. A. HERBERT GRAY, M.A., D.D.

There are many elements in pastoral work: visiting the sick; practical care for the poor; guarding the young; comforting the sad; and so on. But supremely it means entering

into the individual needs, problems, perplexities, temptations, and sorrows of men and women, one by one, and pointing them to the true source of life, energy, strength, and courage. It involves a deep interest in the moods and tenses of the human soul; and it can only be done by men and women who can win the entire confidence of those in need, and who can be trusted to keep all confidences as sacred, secret trusts. It is the supreme privilege of the Minister to be a healer and helper of souls.

Holding an office, or being an ordained person, cannot confer this power. Many laymen and laywomen are doing this work: many clergymen of all churches cannot do it; and they seem to be afraid to try. But what holding an office *does* do is to give us a special access to people. It provides opportunities for meeting those in need. It does at least suggest to them that we may be people who might be able to help; and who could be trusted to keep a confidence. Certainly the position of an ordained minister, an accredited servant of the Church, is in this connection a great privilege, and an invaluable help.

For this part of our calling we have to study actual people. Admitting to begin with that we don't understand either men or women, we have to begin in the infant class. Quickly many things become clear. Many people in middle life have never grown up. They have only an adolescent attitude to life, and they are therefore not adequate to it, and cannot manage it. They have really childish minds. Many more are not unified: their inner selves are a battlefield. Their energy is used up by the conflicts between the unreconciled elements in their natures. Many are obviously frustrated and have never found congenial ways of self-expression. Vast numbers remain victims of mistakes in their early training. They suffer from a sense of inferiority; from Self-regard; Mother-fixations; Obsessions; Complexes; Neurosis. They belong to the vast army of the fearful. With a very great number the trouble is that they are *not married*: with another great number the trouble is that they *are married*, but have not learnt the art of living the married life, or have chosen the wrong person. Sex, misused, or misunderstood, is complicating the lives of uncounted multitudes.

Add those who are suffering from remorse—those who despise themselves—those who have a heavy cross in their

daily lives—those who are intellectually dishonest, or spiritually weak—those who are in poor nervous health, or in economic distress—those *starved* for want of love—those who are desperately lonely—those whom bereavement has crippled—those who are tormented by ambition—those who have developed bad bodily habits—those who have lost hope and spirit—those who seem to have been so made that they *cannot* stand alone—those so fundamentally dishonest that they deceive even themselves throughout life—the selfish—the greedy—the cruel—the vain—the pompous—the ineffective doormat—the jealous—the bitter, etc., etc. And you have then some suggestion of the vast army of people who need the healing of Christ. We are surrounded by them on all sides.

Now the declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is of very real value in relation to all these people *if* they hear it. Every now and then the truth breaks in upon people and is recognised as the word they need. Few ministers have not found that some word given to them to speak has done healing and saving work for individuals, even though the minister concerned may not have heard about it for years afterwards. Oh yes! I believe in preaching. But the greater part of the work of helping these people *must* be done through individual contacts. The majority of them feel that sermons about general spiritual truths do not meet their case. And very many of them need desperately the relief that comes from unburdening themselves to someone else. Further, they need the help of someone who can interpret them to themselves; and then lead them on to know how God can meet their case.

I do not envy the mere psychologist. He can diagnose, but he cannot heal. No man can. But we can at least point a person to God Who can. That is a very large part of our calling. Can the art be taught? I would answer:—ministers can be trained, but for the most part it must be learnt by experience. And a large part of the learning is to learn to listen. The question to-day is:—Can men alone do this work? And I believe the answer is "No."

What are the facts? Very large numbers of women prefer to turn to a man in their need, and want a man confessor. The reasons for that are very numerous and I need not try to enumerate them. One contributory factor is that

because the problems of many women are related to some man, they need a man's view of the situation. Also, many women have been used to confiding in their father and naturally turn to a man's mind for enlightenment. Whatever the reason, there is the fact: men, because they are men, can help women. That is one of the values of sex difference.

But is the converse of this true? That women, because they are women, can help men in many of their distresses? That is not generally believed, *but I am sure of it*. And the experience of the few women ministers we have is already proving it. One reason is that often a man's problems are related to some woman, and he needs a woman's understanding to help him out. But more than that, confiding in a strong, large-hearted woman is to many a man easier than confiding in another man. And it is an immense relief, and a salutary and stimulating experience. One cannot escape amusement at one line of objection that is taken:—"Is there not a danger that if men become confidential with women, they may become very fond of them? In fact, that an element of sex attraction will enter into the situation?" I would not call that a danger. I would call it inevitable. Affection and gratitude are generally produced by confidential relationships, and they are the gracious accompaniments of that kind of service. All the world is familiar with them when they happen to men ministers. There can hardly be a faithful minister in England who, by middle life, is not cheered and helped on his way by the affection of his people, many of whom are women.

There are, of course, foolish, vain, or weak ministers who encourage the wrong kind of affection, and dishonour their Office. There may be in time foolish, vain, or weak women ministers who will make similar mistakes. But the prevailing standards, the diffused common-sense of mankind, and their own consciences and honour, do keep the vast majority of ministers from this folly. What shadow of reason is there for doubting that the same thing would happen with women ministers? People who are afraid in this connection should stand for a ministry of men to men only; and of women to women only; which would be intolerable. The sexes need each other in this connection, as in all others. So I do particularly desire to see women in such a position as will give them a chance to exercise the full pastoral office. Some men

I know need the help which only a woman can give; and there must be thousands more of them.

THE REV. DOROTHEA BELFIELD, DSS.

When I try to define my conception of the contribution which women have to make to the "Church of To-Morrow," the word 'fulness' seems to express most adequately what is in my mind. There is, I believe, a wealth of human experience of divine truth which is being unused in the ordered ministry of to-day: there are 'unsearchable riches of Christ' which may yet be given to the world through that ministry by those who are now being restricted to the position of recipients. To allow women equal opportunities with men in the service of God and Man is not to destroy the law of commissioned service but rather to fulfil it with treasures, both new and old. To refuse them those opportunities is to impoverish the life of the Ministry and, therefore, to impoverish the lives of those who are ministered unto; to say nothing for the moment of the potential loss to that great mass of struggling, sinning, suffering humanity which is so seldom touched by any ministry at all.

In the much discussed Gospel references to the problem of Divorce it is worthy of note—and it is seldom noted—that the Pharisees' question pre-supposes a man's right to put away the woman who belongs to him; just as the Tenth Commandment assumes that a woman is one among many chattels which a man may not unlawfully desire to possess. The rabbinical mind of St. Paul—not done away by his conversion, but in process of slow sublimation by Christian experience—turned naturally to the second chapter of Genesis for guidance:—"neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman (though to be held in honour!) for the man." But the Master's words go deeper to the very heart of things:—

"Have ye not read that He which made them from the beginning, made them male and female?"

"In the image of God created he him; male and female created he *them*." It is startling to find a crude attribution of masculinity to God still surviving in the minds of some people; and even put forward in the writings of such a man as the late Bishop Frere as a conclusive reason for the exclusion of women from the priesthood. It is not desirable, I think,

to attempt here to deal exhaustively with an argument on such a sub-Christian level but, even in a momentary descent to it, it is obvious that both man and woman could not bear the bodily impress of the Creator. It must be in the realm of the spirit that the Divine image is bestowed though—here is the point which now concerns us—it seems to have been essential to the Divine plan that both man and woman should be created to receive it. Are we to suppose that the differences between the sexes are necessary only for the propagation of physical life? Or should we believe that they are factors also, in Time, in the creative activity of the eternal Spirit of God? Surely reverent insight and wholesome common-sense alike should teach us that to divide those who were made together by the Divine craftsman—in whatever sphere of life—is to dishonour both the Creator and the created?

My task to-day is to deal especially with Pastoral Work. I have approached it from this angle because I believe that in this, as in all other aspects of the Christian Ministry, the foundation must be one of theological principle. I cannot stress my conviction too strongly that a disastrous mistake is made when pastoral care is assumed to be of less importance than the ministry of Word and Sacraments and is handed over to those who, in fact or in theory, are in a position of ecclesiastical inferiority. The personal piety of the individual with which it is mainly concerned finds its strength and fulness in sharing in the corporate worship of the Church: but the vitality of that worship is largely dependent upon the spiritual capacity of the individual. There is no greater joy, but there is no heavier responsibility, than is to be found in this aspect of the Cure of Souls. It is no desire for 'status' for its own sake which leads me to press for the authority of full Orders for pastoral work; nor is it even, primarily, my recognition of the many practical advantages which that authority confers. It is to secure, so far as it is possible to do so, that the pastoral office shall have its rightful place in the trilogy of ministerial vocation, and be endowed with the grace which is available through ordination.

It is a commonplace of religious phraseology that the pattern for our ministry has been set for ever in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. We are accustomed to think of Our Lord's adoption of the sacrament of Baptism; and of His institution of the sacrament of Holy Communion: His ascrip-

tion to Himself of the titles of "Servant" and of "Shepherd" are familiar to us all. But I think it is in studying those Old Testament Scriptures which formed so much of His devotional background that we can apprehend most nearly the conception of ministry which filled His mind.*

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

Here we have the commission, the teaching, the care for the sorrowful and the sinning.

"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified."

There we have the end to which all our labours should lead. Yet still there is something more:—I think that for most of us the apprehension of it comes—mercifully—at a later stage in our experience, as it may even, perhaps, have come to Him. The sorrow and the sin must not only be ministered unto; they must be borne:—

"Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

* * * *

It will be seen that there is nothing here which is distinctively masculine or feminine: the spirit of the Christian ministry is common to all who can receive it; the functions of the Christian minister are possible to all who, with that spirit, have a sound mind and body. It is, I think, in the manner of exercising those functions that diversity may be looked for and it follows, if this be true, that the work of the ministry must be incomplete if it lacks the contribution of both men and women.

Once, in my Wiltshire parish an old woman ended her congratulations on the number of men in my congregation with words which were truer than she knew:—'How plucky

* Cp. St. Luke IV, 16-21.

they men be!" I think the kindly folk, both men and women, who filled the little church, were conscious only of the sharing by minister and people in the homely worship of God. But there is a courage which is needed to break with old traditions and to create precedents, the end of which we shall not see, and I would like to record my debt of gratitude to the priest and people who made possible for me the experience upon which I am largely drawing to-day.

The man's mind has something to give to women; the woman's mind to men: of that I have no doubt at all. The trouble is, that, while the first part of the thesis is accepted without question in ecclesiastical circles, the second part is ignored or, at best, relegated only to non-liturgical occasions and so deprived of the authority which the 'occasion' confers. I believe it to be true also that a woman's thought more easily reaches out to the future; a man's more readily dwells in the present. In the life of the home, the mother most often sees in the child that which is to be; the father that which is; and it is in a happy blending of these faculties in the parents that a wise upbringing is secured. In another sphere of work, Lord Horder has pointed out that while there is no difference in the position of men and women in the medical profession, there are different qualities which are specially characteristic of the sexes, and which are complementary to each other in the work as a whole. Surely there is a place for a similar co-operation in the family life of the parish and in the arduous labours of the physician of souls?

A fine tradition has associated the name of "Father" with the ministerial calling. But it is not complete. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" finds its counterpart in the Old Testament in a phrase which is no less all-embracing:—"As one whom His mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." It is clear from the context that the reference here is not to soothing caresses but to enabling power. So in human relationships, and not least when they are embodied in the pastoral ministry, man's pity for the weaker vessel needs to be supplemented by woman's comfort in the equipment for the Battle of Life. And here there is no destruction, but rather a fulfilment, of the enveloping love which is the hall-mark of the Christian minister:—"Even as a hen gathers her chickens under her

wings." Who has not seen the cock-bird also sheltering his young?—for I presume that we need not restrict the image to the domestic fowl!

Most of us must have listened with some impatience to eulogistic references to the debt men owe to women, especially in their early years. There is always a certain unreality about them. The child who has learned to pray "at his mother's knee," learns from adolescence onward to discount a woman's leadership in prayer. The early teaching which he has received from her is continued in later years—if it is continued at all—by men alone. Her very capacity for motherhood is represented to him as precluding her from any share in offering the Sacrifice of Christ, or in feeding the people with the Bread of Life. I believe that the anomalous position of women in the Church to-day is injuring not only women, but men also. All who are accustomed to parochial visiting will be familiar with the half-contemptuous, wholly indifferent attitude of men, in all classes of society, to the religious interests of their wives and children. To them, Church matters are "the parson's job," or "the woman's hobby"; they are not the concern of men, except on rare occasions as an adjunct to State or Civic affairs.

It is for clergy and ministers to ask themselves why they so often fail to command respect. In the case of women I do not think that the answer is far to seek and it underlies much of the thoughtless indifference to spiritual things which is so much advertised to-day. It may sound paradoxical, yet I believe it to be true, that the restriction of the ordained ministry to men has lessened, rather than enhanced, the value of its message for the ordinary men who are often so conspicuously absent from our congregations. From their youth up they have been accustomed to assume without question that women are unable to exercise a public ministry: women, therefore, as women, must be inferior in some respect to men. On the other hand, the services of the Church are mainly supported by women: such services, therefore, must be intended normally for inferiors.

Would the ordination of women help to improve the situation? It is my belief that it would; but slowly, for it is only by slow stages that any radical change in outlook can be safely achieved. As generations of boys and girls grow to maturity, accustomed to the equal ministrations of men and

women in church and parish, so we may look for a new attitude of mind towards each other, not only in spiritual things, but also in the daily affairs of life. They will hear the Faith presented by men and women; equally, yet with that difference in presentation which is needed for the fulness of Truth to be revealed: they will receive the Sacrament from the hands of men and women; and come to realise more nearly their oneness in Him from whom the gift comes: and in their homes, men and women will come to them, equally, as commissioned servants of the Church. "The Lords of the Gentiles have dominion" but, in "one that serveth" there is no distinction of race, or class or sex.

In my judgment a good deal of misleading and rather tiresome nonsense has been talked about the privilege of "the lowest place." It is the place where every woman—or man—should begin: it is a place where, no doubt, some men and women should remain—and think it no shame to do so: but to assume that all women, as women, must occupy it throughout their lives is to dishonour the call of Him who can bid whom He will to "come up higher." It is a foolish arrogance in men; it is a false humility in women. Initiative and experience are Divine gifts; the power of creative work is a Divine attribute; we may not lightly set these things aside. If I may speak of my personal experience in this respect, my own ministry was a happy one, so far as the people were concerned. But day by day I came to realise more keenly the limitations of my office; the inadequacy of the help which it enabled me to give; the impossibility of bringing any work to completion. I could not be content. I have stood beside countless men and women in their pain and sickness, or at the hour of death: I could not bring to them the sacramental Presence nor, if they recovered, offer on their behalf the Sacrifice of Praise. I have been called upon to hear the confessions of men and women; I have given them of my best in prayer and counsel: I could not leave them with the "benefit of Absolution" which the Church has led so many of her children to desire. I have taught my people from reading-desk and pulpit; and prepared them, young and old, for Confirmation: I could not minister to them at the Lord's Table; nor give the Blessing to the flock I knew and loved. And I have seen how often these disabilities must render even pastoral work impossible for women: few parishes can afford

a member of the clerical staff who cannot exercise the normal duties of the clergy. On the darker side of my experience I do not wish to dwell. There are few harsher sorrows than to build, to plant, to kindle; and to see the work destroyed by hostile or indifferent hands.

But the chief value in experience lies, not in reminiscence, but in "the divining of things to come." It is upon that note that I would end. We stand between yesterday and to-morrow; both are ours: the present passes from us and is gone. The task before us is one of synthesis:—to bring together more closely in the service of the Church, the minds, the spirits and the practical abilities of men and women. There are many obstructions in the way: some are from without; but some are from within, and these only we, as women, can face and overcome. I am convinced that one of them is the division which has grown up among us between profession and vocation. Every profession should be undertaken vocationally; every vocation—at any rate so far as the ordained ministry is concerned—should be exercised professionally. There has been a wealth of devotion and self-sacrifice in the work of women for the Church; but too often it has been marred and rendered ineffective by slipshod ways, and pettiness of aim. The criticism of women in the parishes is often unkind; the refusal of many clergy and ministers to take them seriously is often ignorant and unfair; but it is not *always* without justification. A good deal more nonsense has been talked about the difficulties which would attend on women's ministry: in reality they are the difficulties which belong to every human relationship; no more and no less. But we can best meet these fears by the manner in which we approach the position which we desire to fill. Women must not be merely conscious of the call of God; they must be fitted in both mind and method to take their place beside the best and ablest men.

And there is another cleavage which is growing up among us and which may wreck the end we all desire. It is the division between those whose call is to the Ministry, and those to whom the call has come to serve as members of the laity. *Surely* there is room for both vocations in the Church of God? I have sought to show the need for men and women in the Ministry: there is as great a need for workers, clerical and lay, in every parish. I do not look for revival in the Church

to come through many organisations: rather it will come 'soul by soul, and silently' through the 'ministry of persons to persons' in the trilogy of Word and Sacraments and Pastoral Care which has come down to us through the ages. Whether it be as lay ministers, or as clergy, let us work together; men and women gathered into the oneness of Christ Jesus our Lord. So, in the Church of To-morrow:—

'They shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of former generations. . . . For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before the nations.'

THIRD SESSION.

As the paper read by Canon Guy Rogers, M.A., M.C., in this Session is to form part of a book which he hopes to publish shortly, we have been asked by him not to include it in this Report. In order to preserve the balance of two papers in each Session we have therefore obtained Mrs. Hugh Martin's consent to her address being published in *The Coming Ministry* for April, 1939.

Each copy of this Report has cost 3½d. to produce. It is issued free, but the Society will be most grateful for any contribution towards the expense of printing and postage.

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