

DUP.

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

The Church
 Militant
"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,
but mighty through God."

Vol. XVI. New Series. No. 3.
Quarterly.

JULY, 1927
Price 6d.

The L.C.M. (ANGLICAN.)

Working primarily for the Admission of Women to Holy Orders.

OBJECTS.

1. To urge the Church to full recognition in its own ordered life, and to more strenuous advocacy in the life of the nation, of the equal worth of all humanity in the sight of God, without distinction of race, class or sex.

2. In obedience to this principle to pray and work for:—

(a) The maintainance and setting forward of the belief that women as well as men are truly called of God and should be ordained to the Sacred Ministry of the Catholic Church, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ: for the promoting of God's glory and the edifying of His people.

(b) The candidature of women to the Councils and Lay Offices of the Church and the safeguarding of the position of women serving the Church in other ways.

(c) The establishment of equal rights and opportunities for men and women in Church and State.

(d) Equal opportunities for all to develop to the utmost their God-given faculties in a community ordered on the basis of justice and brotherhood.

(e) The settlement of all international questions on the basis of right, not of might.

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Prayer in 1927.

We are keeping before us this year, three ways in which we are seeking to examine the truth that "in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female." Having considered the reception of Truth, our thoughts this quarter are grouped under the heading

THE ASSIMILATION OF TRUTH.

"The inspiration of The Almighty giveth them understanding."

"He that receiveth seed into good ground is he that heareth the word and understandeth it."

Let us pray that we may make this truth our own. (Note the difference between hearing the truth and making it our own—assimilating it—so that it alters one's outlook on life, gives one a truer sense of values, and stabilises one's judgment).

Let us pray that we may have the open mind that makes assimilation possible; that our soil may be "good ground."

Let us pray for the L.C.M. Church Congress Campaign at Ipswich; for all speakers at Church Congress meetings.

Let us pray for true fellowship in the search for and assimilation of Truth.

"O God, Who alone makest men to be of one mind in a house, unite us, we pray Thee, one with another in the bonds of charity and peace. Grant us to think no evil one of another, and to judge others by that same rule of charity by which we ourselves would be judged. And leading us ever onwards into truer knowledge of Thy word and will, free us from those differences of thought and outlook which hinder our fellowship, for Jesus Christ's sake."

House of Laity ... 230 92

By the request of the Archbishop, the figures were received without applause.

We wish to record our most grateful and affectionate thanks to the Archbishop for having guided the Church through to this successful issue.

The L.C.M. (ANGLICAN.)

Working primarily for the Admission of Women to Holy Orders.

St. Margaret's Day, July 20th, 1927.

Let us confess before God :—

Our broken fellowship ; our lack of co-operation that hinders His work, making us weak just where we need to be strong.

Let us give thanks to God :—

For His guidance to us in the past.
For opportunities of service given by Him.
For the Communion of Saints. For all those known to us in the flesh, who have been fellow-workers with us in the L.C.M.

For God's work in history ; for His spirit in modern movements, especially that in which the L.C.M. takes its part.

Let us pray, for ourselves personally and for the League as a corporate body :—

For courage to face reality.
For strength of purpose.
For charity, and forbearance.
For wisdom to see what is best to do, and what best to leave undone.

That the enthusiasm of the younger generation may be turned into the right channels : that indifference may be turned into enthusiasm.

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The insertion of Letters and of Signed Articles in this paper implies that their contents are thought likely to prove of interest; but the League is not responsible for the opinions thus expressed.

St. Margaret's Day, July 20th.

It is fitting that we should mark the day of the League's Patron Saint by some special corporate act.

This year, members are invited to keep the day as a day of silent intercession.

By the kindness of the Rev. P. T. R. Kirk, Christ Church, Victoria Street, Westminster, is to be our rallying point for the day. The church will be open from 8-30 in the morning until 6-30 in the evening. Those within reach of London are earnestly invited to attend the celebration of Holy Communion at 8-30 a.m., and to send word to the secretary (if possible) at what hour they will be able to attend during the day for half an hour or quarter of an hour's silent prayer on behalf of the work of the League.

It is hoped to fill in all the hours from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., the earlier and later hours being kept by members in other churches nearer their homes. It would be helpful if they could let the Secretary know what time they will be taking.

Suggestions for corporate thought and prayer will be found on the inset in this quarter's "Church Militant."

The Debate on the Prayer Book.

The Archbishop of Canterbury presided at the Summer Session of the Church Assembly, held on July 4th and the following days, when the Prayer Book Measure was being considered for final approval. There was a record attendance of the House, and the public galleries were crowded to the utmost capacity.

As we are just going to press, it is impossible to write of the speeches, but comment must be made on the voting. The figures were :—

	<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
House of Bishops	34	4
House of Clergy	253	37
House of Laity	230	92

By the request of the Archbishop, the figures were received without applause.

We wish to record our most grateful and affectionate thanks to the Archbishop for having guided the Church through to this successful issue.

"Unlicensed Preachers."

By E. LOUIE ACRES.

In our report of the meeting of the English Church Union, at which a protest against "unlicensed preachers" was made, we gave at some length Prebendary Leary's speech, in which he criticised the invitation given to a woman to preach at Evensong in Liverpool Cathedral. Prebendary Leary entirely missed the real point at issue in overlooking the fact that the preacher, to whom reference was made, is an authorised person considered to have a message to her day and generation. She is a holder of the Inter-diocesan certificate (Grade A) for evangelistic and pastoral work, and therefore has the bishop's "recognition" on the recommendation of the Diocesan Board of Women's Work in the diocese in which she lives. She also had the permission—for she spoke at his invitation—of the bishop in whose diocese she had preached at Evensong. That being so, one can only conclude that Prebendary Leary was speaking on personal grounds rather than on a point of principle, and his speech is therefore entirely regrettable.

Thus, to be of any value, the protest of the English Church Union should define the word "unlicensed." Many bishops authorise licensed lay women workers in their dioceses, and permission is frequently given to members of the laity—both men and women—to preach on specific occasions, which permission is tantamount to a temporary license. Are all these to be ruled out?

Several of the committees appointed by the Archbishop after the National Mission of 1916 recommended that use should be made of the laity in this way, as did also the Lambeth Conference of 1920 in Resolution 53.

In the Report on the Teaching Office of the Church "the apparent reluctance of the church to give even the instructed laity sufficient responsibility in the work of teaching" was touched upon. It was felt by the Committee that "the same authority and encouragement should be given to women in the exercise of the teaching office in the church as to men." The Committee on the Worship of the Church reported that it would welcome such "extension of the power of preaching and instruction, both to lay men and women, as may be judged consistent with Catholic order and the need of the times." Another strong appeal that the laity should have opportunity to use their evangelistic and prophetic gifts was made in the Report on the Evangelistic Work of the Church. "Evangelisation has its charisma, not necessarily conveyed by ordination, not limited to the threefold ministry and not restricted to one sex."

We have the greatest sympathy with the desire of the E.C.U. that everything should be done with decency and in order. We too desire every care to be taken that "fit persons" only are invited to occupy the pulpits of the Church of England, but spiritual and mental fitness and physical suitability are independent of sex. Thus, as long as Lay Readers are allowed to preach, a similar opportunity should be given to suitable lay women, for it is foolish to use but half of the laity. There are laymen on the Council of the English Church Union who not infrequently preach in churches, and we have to yet hear that the E.C.U. wishes to include these officials of the Church in the category of "unlicensed preachers."

Christ and the Ministry of Women.

A SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE L.C.M. PUBLIC MEETING ON MARCH 25TH
BY THE REV. CANON C. E. RAVEN, D.D.

It is an extraordinarily good thing from my point of view, having in mind the subject on which I am supposed to speak, that we have been confronted by the two previous speakers with so many staggering facts, with so strongly painted a picture of that situation before which so many of us, especially of my generation, are standing at the present moment rather aghast. We are aware, and I am speaking of those between 30 and 45, that our generation has been bled white of its best. We are aware that we ought to be carrying on our shoulders the bulk of the world's work at this time, and yet know that we dare not look over the lists of our old school-fellows, of those who were our pupils and colleagues in our universities, because the bulk of those for whom we hoped great things are dead. We who are oppressed by the gloom of that picture turn naturally, I think, as the main source of our hope for the possibility of meeting it, to what I may speak of in its widest sense as a "Ministry of Women": I mean that full and free and equal co-operation between men and women in doing the world's work which, if we achieve it wholly, may well be the most powerful factor in meeting these tremendous issues with which Miss Wrong and Miss Bondfield have presented us.

De-humanization, de-personalization, the creation of a great machine over which the ethical and spiritual forces of mankind seem to have lost control, however you describe it, that is the terror which stands in front of us: and I believe with all my heart that if and when the womanhood of this country and of the world realises its political and social responsibilities, if and when it does so, we shall see the human element, the personal relationships, the revolt against mechanization, voiced as no mere man can voice it. For if there is a broad and general difference between men and women in their thinking, it is surely that men incline naturally to think in terms of problems, whereas women—and in this I think they are more Christian—think in terms of persons.

To me, at any rate, having watched it through all the phases of education—I have been associated with every type of education in the course of my life—and having now seen it both in country districts and in great cities, such co-operation is possibly the supreme hope of the present time, is in some respects—because every hope has its peril—also our greatest danger. So if we are to approach this question of the Ministry of Women in relation to our Lord and in particular with reference to the narrower field of the Church, I am glad that we should set out at the start against the wide background of the world's need. If we are quite sure that need makes it essential that every citizen should grow up not only with an understanding of their responsibilities, but with the power to make that understanding effective, with the sense that their citizenship is a ministry—and I believe in the political sphere we should all accept that view, as we should surely accept it in the social sphere—then it becomes an easy task for me to plead that it is wholly impossible, to put it at its lowest, that we in the Church should refuse to recognise an equality of ministry.

If it is true that we look to that equality to meet our almost intolerable situation as a civilisation, then it seems to me that the attitude of those who still think that to suggest the ministry of women in relation to the Church is to be fantastic, heterodox, ridi-

culous, can surely no longer be sustained. And yet only a few weeks ago I had myself an acute example of how prevalent is that habit of dismissing the idea of the ministry of women in the Church. I happen to have written a short and very bad article in a book called "The Future of Christianity" on "the Church and Sacraments." I agree that the article was very bad, without it being necessary for the introducer of the book to blame me in his introduction; but when he added, as the sum of my offences, that "the emphasis which the writer gives to the ministry of women will seem to most disproportionate and to many offensive. Why was it necessary to burden a book dealing with the future of Christianity with so precarious a speculation?" then I am bound to say, seeing that I only spent two lines on the subject in an essay of fifteen pages, that the mentality of the introducer is rather beyond my comprehension. I should have thought that no-one could have discussed the future of Christianity or of the Church without seeing that among the supremely important issues which are facing all Christian people who think about the Church at the present moment, this question of opening the doors of the Church that women may come in fully and fairly and on equal terms, was at any rate one which could not be neglected by any thinking person, that it could not be regarded as precarious or speculative. After all, it affects the future of half the human race: and no-one can read our Lord's character or teaching or example without seeing that if present conditions on the industrial side are open to his rebukes, as Miss Bondfield suggested, the present situation in the Church is surely not less open to them in its insistence upon those "traditions of the elders" which above all human conventions he denounced.

After all, if the Church is to fulfil its function, if it is in any way to bring about that change of spirit for which our previous speakers have pleaded, if it is to be, as we should claim that it is, the body of Christ, that is, if it is to think and act and be what He was in the days of His flesh, then surely it must express in its organisation the reality of what is actually going on. The outward and visible signs and symbols must be truly representative of the inward and spiritual realities. In a Church where in point of fact the ministry of women is so signally blessed, where we are so magnificently served by them, it cannot be right to retain from them, to refuse to them the authorisation of the Church to exercise that ministry in its name and with its power.

Appeal straight away to the classic case of St. Peter in the house of Cornelius. He saw that here was the Spirit operative, and he said at once, "Can any man refuse water that these should not be baptised?" Now, it is perfectly evident that in almost every department of what is properly ministerial work there are women, not as many of them as there would be if they were recognised, but women of eminent influence and quality in every single sphere. I suppose that in the last ten years I have probably been connected with as many different movements in British Christendom as anyone in this hall: I am rather ashamed of it, but it is a fact; and I can only say this: that if I were to ask myself who was the greatest preacher, or the greatest organiser, or the greatest spiritual director, or the greatest example of spiritual power and saintliness in my knowledge, I should be very sorely tempted to put a woman at the head of the list in all four cases; and this, believe me, not from any particularly strong feminist prejudice. It is simply because I have seen their work along side of my own and other men's work, and I know that it is of supreme and magnificent Christlikeness as well as extraordinarily

efficient. That being so, it seems to me to be misunderstanding the whole principle of the organisation of the Church, the whole relation of the outward to the inward, to say that when these actual ministries of the Spirit are manifested among us as they are manifested, we should stand aloof and say, "No. Our outward organisation is so rigid, is so traditional, so tied and bound, so inelastic that though those ministries are perfectly obvious as channels of the Spirit in these days, we cannot put upon them the outward and visible seal of their recognition." That seems to me to be theologically a quite impossible position to maintain. As a theologian I think that it is to make nonsense of all sacramental doctrine. Here is this work being done: If the Church is what we claim, the organism, inward and outward, which mediates the life of the Spirit, then its outward expression must be so modified as to correspond to the inward reality.

That first is a theological argument, but I believe that it is a sound one. Then, of course, there is the broad appeal to the practical. We have an immense need,—and as responsible for the candidates for ordination in a great diocese I know how great the need is—we have an immense need in the life of the Church, as in the life of the nation, that every single active member of the Church should be encouraged by all possible means to devote what they can of time and talent to the service of Jesus Christ, and that in every possible way they should be assisted so to use their gifts as may promote what St. Paul calls the "edifying of the body."

Well, what happens? We are drawing for our ministry on a very small section of the Church population. We are failing, to our shame, to get the best in any large numbers. We are trying to carry on with what—though it sounds unfair to many noble, hardworking, rather heroic youngsters, who are training for orders in face of very great difficulties—with what I must describe as very second-rate material; and nothing makes me more ashamed and distressed than my knowledge that there are a very considerable number of young women graduates of quite first-rate ability who would be available if the Church to which they wish to dedicate themselves did not interpose a sex bar against them. It is really tragic to go round—we all go round—and hear the kind of sermons which are sometimes preached, the kind of men who are called to minister, and to know that we are only using a very small proportion of the best life available for work which, if we are Christians, we must recognise ought to extend to the uttermost the very best that we have, and for which the very best that we have ought to be allowed to offer itself.

I am not suggesting that there are multitudes of women highly qualified to follow Miss Royden's footsteps, and hold great audiences spellbound, but I am suggesting, and with a fairly strong knowledge of university life in this country, that there is a very large and increasing stream of young life—young women's life—which would look towards the ministry with the desire to consecrate itself to that service if they were not aware that for no reason which they can understand except the sole reason of tradition, they are debarred from considering it on any terms at all. I suggest that the sole reason is tradition; that surely is true. I have tried, as I daresay many of you have tried, to discover what are the vital arguments against the bestowal upon women of what is called the "grace of order." The arguments seem to me to depend usually upon a conception of the grace of order which would not stand scientific examination for one moment, which regards it as either magic and therefore liable to a sort of taboo, or as so purely mechanical that it cannot escape from certain rigid pipes or channels through which it has been passed

down the ages ; neither of these surely is an adequate description of what we mean by grace. Or else they involve a conception of tradition to which our Lord's denunciation of the Pharisees applies in every particular, a conception of tradition which literally refuses to face the facts because it believes that when a thing has once been said by a particular authority, whatever be the facts that decision stands. That is tradition which makes the Word of God the word of the ever-speaking Spirit of none effect now as it did in Galilee.

It is, after all, thank God, to the example and life and outlook of Jesus Christ that this generation is steadily, and I believe rightly, returning. Among the signs of hope surely not the least is that after these many years of uncertainty, while critics of this school and of that school seemed to be taking away all that Christianity meant to many of us, we have at last reached the point at which we quite evidently know far more than any other generation since the Apostles about the mind and method and movement of our Lord. We can surely appeal quite fearlessly to Him who never treated human beings on mass-production lines, but always took the individual, the person, as a person, who refused to accept the Pharisees' description of what manner of woman it was that touched Him, refused to classify and to generalise. Always when appealing to persons, of whatever class or race or sex, to follow Him, He never rejected any honestly offered gift. He saw so grandly the presence of God in all our human aspirations that whatever anyone offered, whether it was their mite, or their "vase of ointment of spikenard very precious," He would not reject either the spirit or the gift.

If we are to see, as St. Paul would have us see, all mankind made one in Christ, if in the fellowship that is to be we are to grow together to the fullness of the measure of His stature, then side by side and together, each free to exercise to the full the functions for which God's gifts and God's talents enable them, side by side together we shall move forward until the Church is in fact what it is, I suppose, though when we see it in its present state we can hardly believe it, already in theory ; the outward expression in the community of men and women of the one life which is the life of Jesus Christ, in whom "is neither male nor female."

News from Overseas.

We regret that our first duty in these notes is to bid farewell to Miss Edith Rodgers, who has been responsible for them for many years. Miss Rodgers' resignation from the League (recorded in the April *Church Militant*) involves her retirement from the office of Overseas Correspondent and we are sure that we are not alone in the regret and dismay we feel. Members and friends of the League overseas, as well as those at home, who know Miss Rodgers and her work, will join us in thanking her for all she has done for us and in hoping that one day she may again see her way to rejoining our ranks.

We are glad to be able to state that Miss J. Fearne Bell has kindly undertaken temporarily to carry on the duties of Overseas Correspondent. We hope our members and friends abroad will write to her as they used to write to Miss Rodgers, so that material for these notes may not be lacking.

Our representative at the Presentation of the Fifth World Call Report writes :—

"The great call from 'Our Own People Overseas' was first given by Dr. Garfield Williams, followed by Lord Selborne for

Africa, Lord Chelmsford for Australia and Sir Anton Bertram for India, Burma and Ceylon. This last interested me greatly, for there is an especial cry for more women as lay-workers and as deaconesses in this special field. It is a call that I feel might be answered if members of women's societies, and especially L.C.M. members, put the question to themselves!"

* * * *

British Columbia has sought to guard against female dominance in the Anglican Synod by making the admittance of women depend upon the elected representatives of each parish consisting of at least 50 per cent. of male communicants. H.C.E.

Church Congress Campaign.

Arrangements are now being made for our annual campaign in connection with the Church Congress. This year the Congress is to be held in Ipswich during the first week in October.

Canon Raven has very kindly consented to speak for the League at a meeting to be held on the afternoon of the 4th October. The subject of his address is "The Ordination of Women," a challenging title, which has been deliberately chosen, and meets with the speaker's cordial approval. All those who heard Canon Raven's uncompromising and inspiring addresses in Southport and in London will realise how fortunate we are in having him to speak for us. We are told that he is well-known in Ipswich, and our friends in the town prophesy a large attendance and a splendid meeting. To ensure the fulfilment of this cheerful prophecy, we have only to make the meeting as widely known as possible, but this essential task is not a light one, and all offers of help will be gladly welcomed.

The large Co-operative Hall has been secured for Canon Raven's meeting. It seats about six hundred people, and is being used for some of the Congress meetings. Just opposite it is the small Co-operative Hall, and this will be our office during Congress week. It will serve as our headquarters, and should prove a convenient meeting-place for workers and centre for enquiries. We hope to attract a good many visitors by serving teas, a womanly occupation, with which our strongest opponents cannot find fault, but which may prove useful for our purpose. On one afternoon there will probably be an office meeting, which may take the form of an At Home, followed by speeches. The position of the small Hall makes it specially suitable for our purpose, and the organisers have visions of attractive and arresting posters which will be seen by all who attend meetings at the Large Hall. The possibility of serving teas and the success of the scheme depends upon the support of those members of the League who are willing and able to give their time. There will be plenty of hard work for all who like it!

Our Corporate Communion will take place at one of the services to be held daily at St. Mary le Tower, the municipal Church. The vicar received our request about this service most kindly, and agreed to read one of our prayers.

We shall, as usual, have a stall at the Exhibition, where the work of the League will be brought to the notice of many visitors. Help will also be needed here.

The organisers will be most grateful, both for contributions towards the expense of the campaign and offers of personal service.

JOYCE POLLARD, }
LUCY HAMMICK, } Joint Hon. Organisers.

The Post Reformation Woman.

By MRS. M. B. BYRDE.

After the Reformation there was a sudden declension in the position of women, ideally and practically. This statement is not made to disparage the Reformation; there is a reason for that declension, which was only temporary. Moreover, although Christianity has at its roots the essential principle by which womanhood stands, and although womanhood had apparently risen to her place because of it, she had not risen far under the undivided Church, nor was the essential principle recognised under the mystic veil by which it was concealed—the worship of the Virgin Mother of God. We need not pay too much attention to the exceptional women. These have always been, in all ages, in all countries and under or in spite of all religions. The position of women in general remained very low when the few were exalted, either in Church or State. They were not emancipated, that is, set free, from the trammel of sex, even by Mariolatry. But the exaltation of virginity did go some distance in the right direction, if with the wrong ideal, which the new one, and better, of all life being sacred, was to supersede.

This secularising of human life, as the mediævalists thought it, bore hardly upon women at first. It stressed the married state, held the matron in higher honour, but somewhat depressed the mother. But the matron, in this matter of women's position can take care of herself in any state of society, at least better than the unmarried.

As long as sex is held to be of the first importance, the sexual relation will give woman a certain power, a power so great as to really make her equal to man if she recognises and uses it. Nature provides for that. But it is not a power the best women can use with self-approbation. The true woman hates to feel that she is wheedling or flattering, still less using more doubtful weapons. She wants her power to be womanly, and so to appeal. And here is where the true virginity comes in—the singleness, the sincerity, in which the two sexes can meet, equal yet diverse.

In the struggle for this high aim it is the single woman who most characteristically leads, just as in mediæval times the nun did, as representing the mediæval ideal. The position of woman, *as woman*, as an individual of another sex indeed, but as individually human as a man, depends upon how the unmarried woman is regarded, and how she regards herself. In mediæval days virginity was esteemed for itself, was supposed to be a holier condition than marriage. This was not a Christian ideal, but it made for a better position for women. With the Reformation came back the Judaic conception of the family. The father was paramount, and whatever special glory had fallen upon motherhood in virtue of Mother Mary was now taken away, with a stern reminder of Mother Eve, who came first and whose sin was not to be forgotten.

One has but to become familiar with the literature of the 17th and 18th centuries to see how rapidly the status of womanhood declined, how much less dignified was motherhood than in earlier days. Doubtless individual mothers held their own, by virtue of character, but the father is the prominent figure of the family in general, and the unmarried woman went downwards with astonishing celerity.

From the Reformation onwards we see growing that slighting, almost contemptuous sentiment, which came to its culmination in the

last century, recorded in novels, plays and light essays, pictured in "Punch" and other humorous papers, a sentiment freely and grossly uttered in common conversation until the "old maid" magically ceased to be. Woman's worst humiliation and torture had abated; the single woman had won her right to *be*, with man having nothing to say about it. This has been the real crux of the situation. Women are not honoured as long as that honour is extended to them as being appendages of men. None of the natural relations of life have changed or can change. But the principle of Christianity had to be worked out through the unmarried woman. It was not worked out in mediæval times, but through the glorification of virginity and the providing of a vocation for the unmarried, full of opportunities and privileges and highly honoured, the way was paved for such free working.

The Reformation, in destroying the conventual ideal, did well in part, asserted the sanctity of common life, but in destroying the nunneries and condemning single women to uselessness, misery, dependency and scorn, it went further to destroy that sanctity. It ended, of course, in lowering the whole status of women for nearly 300 years.

The Jewish contempt for the sex returned among the puritanic. Sex reared its head, mightily and proudly, demanding that there should be no other measure of a woman than her use to it, in some way or another. Women accepted the situation. It was never a terror haunting a woman that she might not marry while there was one vocation open to her talents or lack of them. It became one during the post-Reformation period. And although it was a married woman who first voiced the indignation of a sex, towards the end of the 18th century, and started the rebellion, the campaign has been, first to last, based upon the wrongs of the woman without a vocation, namely, the single woman, and manned by single women. We hear no more of "old maids," thank heaven! They are as extinct as the Dodo. But for the centuries since the Reformation, since the fall in England of an ideal which did venerate womanhood, and most when above sex, the power and dignity of womanhood was on the wane, till at last the position became intolerable.

Notes of the Quarter.

During the quarter, a study group was formed as a result of a meeting held in Church House, Barnet, at which Mrs. Harrison presided, and Mr. Marston Acres spoke on "Women and the Sacred Ministry." The group met four times to discuss the proposals of the Deposited Prayer Book, with special reference to L.C.M. aims.

* * * *

The Women's Freedom League invited women's organizations to join them in honouring the memory of John Stuart Mill on the hundred and twenty-first anniversary of his birthday. Accordingly, at noon on the 20th May, a little band of women, led by Dame Millicent Fawcett, visited Temple Gardens and laid tributes of flowers on the statue of this man pioneer of women's freedom. The L.C.M. contributed a beautiful sheaf of yellow and white flowers, sent by Mrs. Montgomrey.

* * * *

On June 2nd the Central House for the Order of Deaconesses at Hindhead was blessed by the Bishop of Winchester after a service at

St. Alban's Church, which was filled by a large congregation. The Bishop, clergy and deaconesses, followed by the laity, processed across the heath to the House. It was only possible for the Provincial Council and one or two others to accompany the Bishop into the house, but through the open windows most of the words were audible to those assembled outside. Head Deaconess Mary Siddall is to be the first Head Deaconess of the Central House, and any one interested is invited to write to her. Laywomen as well as Deaconesses are invited to spend shorter or longer periods at the House.

The Prime Minister's recent speech on Equal Franchise was a clear and welcome statement of his attitude to this subject. The women's organisations, while greatly appreciating Mr. Baldwin's sympathy, feel anxious that the Government should lose no time in converting principle into practice and introducing an Equal Franchise Bill. Such a Bill is promised for next session, but the postponement of next session until February means that there is a serious risk that the bill may not be passed in time for next election.

A very active campaign for Equal Franchise is being carried on by the Equal Political Rights Committee and the societies co-operating with it. The work includes lobbying, deputations to members of Parliament, constituency meetings and open-air meetings. Members of the L.C.M. are helping in all these ways, and the League has made itself responsible for fortnightly open-air meetings in Regent's Park. It is also co-operating with other societies in the big demonstration to be held in Trafalgar Square on July 16th. It is hoped that as many members as possible will be present.

Prayer in 1927.

We are keeping before us this year, three ways in which we are seeking to examine the truth that "in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female." Having considered the reception of Truth, our thoughts this quarter are grouped under the heading

THE ASSIMILATION OF TRUTH.

"The inspiration of The Almighty giveth them understanding."

"He that receiveth seed into good ground is he that heareth the word and understandeth it."

Let us pray that we may make this truth our own. (Note the difference between hearing the truth and making it our own—assimilating it—so that it alters one's outlook on life, gives one a truer sense of values, and stabilises one's judgment).

Let us pray that we may have the open mind that makes assimilation possible; that our soil may be "good ground."

Let us pray for the L.C.M. Church Congress Campaign at Ipswich; for all speakers at Church Congress meetings.

Let us pray for true fellowship in the search for and assimilation of Truth.

"O God, Who alone makest men to be of one mind in a house, unite us, we pray Thee, one with another in the bonds of charity and peace. Grant us to think no evil one of another, and to judge others by that same rule of charity by which we ourselves would be judged. And leading us ever onwards into truer knowledge of Thy word and will, free us from those differences of thought and outlook which hinder our fellowship, for Jesus Christ's sake."

Women Deacons.

By THE REV. CYRIL H. NORTON.

Four years ago, in response to the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference of 1920, the diaconate of women was formally and canonically restored by the Convocations of the Church of England. This restoration of the ordination of women, after a lapse of eight centuries, was an event of far-reaching importance; but it passed almost unnoticed at the time, and even now most churchpeople are unaware of it, and some still attempt to maintain that a woman is incapable of receiving Holy Orders. It is therefore desirable to draw attention to the grounds upon which this restoration is abundantly justified and to the hopes which it inspires.

Our Lord's Apostles were all men, but it does not follow that He wished no women ever to be ordained. In the homeless days of His Ministry a woman apostle was an impossibility. But He clearly refused to accept the opinion which was then universal that women are inferior to men. The Apostles marvelled when they found Him speaking with a woman by the well at Sychar, for by doing so He was openly ignoring the social conventions of their day. In the matter of spiritual privilege He made no distinction between men and women. It was to Mary Magdalene, the foremost figure among His women disciples, that He first appeared on the first Easter Day, and He gave to her the high distinction of being the first messenger of His Resurrection. So it is not unreasonable to believe that He left the question of the ordination of women, as He left so many other matters, to be decided later on by His Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in accordance with the changing conditions of succeeding generations. This belief is supported by the fact that in apostolic days the gift of prophecy was entrusted by God to some women, who were allowed to use it for the edification of those who assembled together for common prayer and worship, and that the ordination of women to the diaconate may be traced back to primitive times.

The first deaconess of whom we have any knowledge is Phœbe, "a servant (or deaconess—R.V.m.) of the church that is at Cenchreæ" (Rom. xvi, 1). In commenting on this verse Origen wrote, "Here we learn that female ministers are recognised in the Church." This was also the opinion of Dr. Lightfoot, who in his Primary Charge to the diocese of Durham said, "As I read my New Testament, the female diaconate is a definite institution as the male diaconate. Phœbe is as much a deacon as Stephen or Philip is a deacon."

It can hardly be doubted that the ancient Greek expositors were justified in holding that in I. Tim. iii, 11, St. Paul wrote of women deacons, and Pliny, in his letter to Trajan (A.D. 112), wrote of two *ministrae* who were presumably deaconesses. But while this evidence claims serious consideration it is wise to bear in mind that the conception of an 'order' was not as fixed in those very early days as it became in later times.

From the time of Pliny's letter until about the beginning of the fourth century we know next to nothing of the ministry of women, but this gives no ground for assuming that it had ceased, for the literature of those times which has come down to us is extremely fragmentary.

The *Didascalia*, a Syrian Church order of about A.D. 300, contains this amazing passage:—

“ The Bishop shall sit for you in the place of Almighty God. And the Deacon shall stand in the place of Christ : and ye shall love him. And the Deaconess shall be honoured by you in the place of the Holy Spirit. And the Presbyter shall be to you as a type of the Apostles.”

It would be extremely unwise to lay stress upon anything so fantastic, but it points to the fact that in those days the deaconess held a prominent position in the ministry of the Church.

From the early part of the fourth century for at least seven hundred years we have abundant evidence of the existence of deaconesses in the East, and from the sixth century onwards we find them in the West. The Councils of Nicæa (A.D. 325) and Chalcedon (A.D. 451) legislated about them ; the form for their ordination with the laying-on of hands given in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (about A.D. 375) is precisely similar to that for the ordination of men to the diaconate, and they were clearly reckoned among the clergy. It is noteworthy that the Council of Chalcedon ordered a deaconess who had married to be far more severely punished than a virgin or monk guilty of the same offence, evidently because she had been ordained.

The laws of Justinian make it clear that at Constantinople in the sixth century the woman deacon was regarded as being on a level with the man deacon ; and in the great church of St. Sophia there were to be not more than 140 deacons, of whom 40 were to be women.

As late as the eleventh century three Popes gave to the local bishops the right to ordain deaconesses, but not very long afterwards the only women who were ordained were some leading members of the Religious Orders, and eventually the diaconate of women was allowed to lapse. There was no decision of the Church as a whole against it, and no Council of importance condemned it ; but the need for it was not felt when the anointing of the whole body before baptism was given up, and the Regular Orders were absorbing nearly all the devout unmarried women.

In 1862 Dr. Tait, who was then Bishop of London, admitted Elizabeth Ferard as the first deaconess in the Church of England. The importance of the event was evidently not recognised at the time for it is not recorded in his biography, but it was the beginning of the restoration which is now an accomplished fact.

There are now rather more than 400 deaconesses serving at home and abroad, but the movement has been hindered by the fact that some women churchworkers have been called deaconesses although they never received the laying-on of hands, and still more by the lack of any certainty that those who had received it were in Holy Orders.

This uncertainty has now been happily dispelled, for in response to the resolutions of the Lambeth Conference of 1920 the diaconate of women has been formally and canonically restored, a form of ordination has been drawn up and is now in use, and a Provincial Council for the Order of Deaconesses is at work under the chairmanship of the Bishop of Winchester.

It is not unlikely that in this matter the Church abroad will move less slowly than the Church at home, for at the recent Metropolitan's Visitation of the Diocese of Lahore the deaconesses were cited to appear with the clergy, and to show their licences and Letters of Orders ; and the Bishop of North China, writing in the *Mission Field* of April, 1926, reckoned three deaconesses among the clergy of his diocese.

It is much to be hoped that the number of women deacons serving both at home and abroad will steadily increase, for it is almost equally to be feared that the Church to-day is failing to secure the help of not a few of the women who are best qualified to become efficient churchworkers. They are seeking other spheres of work because they feel that in return for the service of a lifetime they ought to be offered a place among the clergy, with more responsibility and room for initiative than women have hitherto been allowed, and a living wage.

It would be a very great advantage in every large parish to have a trained woman deacon in charge of the work among women and girls, of whose spiritual needs and difficulties most of the clergy know much less than they are apt to suppose.

The Lambeth Conference went a step further when it resolved, (but in this case only by 117 votes to 81), that deaconesses should be allowed “ in church to lead in prayer and, under licence of the Bishop, to instruct and exhort the congregation.” For this proposal no exact precedent can be found in the history of the Church. It would be an innovation, not a revival, for the women who used the gift of prophecy in apostolic days did so because they were prophetesses, not because they were deaconesses, which most of them were not. But it can hardly be doubted that before long this proposal will win acceptance. The social conditions of the present day are very different from those of past centuries, and many women are now taking a large and increasing part in public affairs, to their own credit and the benefit of the community. Even now, in spite of many hindrances and discouragements, some women are singularly helpful and persuasive preachers, and with more opportunities their number would certainly increase.

It is not improbable that the growing shortage of priests may lead to the further innovation of allowing women deacons to administer the chalice. Sub-deacons do so to-day in the Diocese of Johannesburg, and in early times deaconesses were accustomed to communicate sick women with the reserved Sacrament. In parishes where there is only one priest among ten or twenty thousand people, the help of a deaconess on the great festivals would save the early Eucharists from being tiringly long and certainly not lessen their reverence.

It is most desirable that suggested innovations should be candidly criticised, but the criticism which is nothing more than the expression of prejudice hinders the advance of the Church. Prejudice is easily aroused and hard to overcome, but it is not invincible. When Eastern deaconesses first appeared in Gaul near the end of the fourth century the Gaulish bishops denounced them in extremely violent language, but before long in Gaul itself deaconesses were being ordained. So the fact that the ordination of women to the diaconate arouses prejudice to-day is natural rather than disturbing.

We have much to learn from the lessons of the past, but the Church is not bound to a slavish following of all that was allowed or forbidden in very different circumstances many years ago. God the Holy Spirit is in the Church to-day as certainly as He was in the days of the Apostles, and it ought not to disturb us if, under His guidance, and to meet the varying needs of different times, the Church brings forth out of her treasure things new as well as old. We may feel inclined to say, “ The old is better,” but we may well remember that there was a time when the old was new.

Women and the Call from our own People Overseas.

By MARGARET WRONG.

The fifth of the "World Call" reports is of special importance to women for two reasons. First, it is a call to meet the spiritual need of many a lonely and hard driven woman overseas. Every liner leaving these shores carries its quota of such women, who are going to make permanent or temporary homes abroad. The report gives a vivid picture of the odds they have to face. For the settler the pressure of material life is great and often an incessant round of labour leaves little time for spiritual things. In many parts they are cut off from the regular services of the Church to which they have been accustomed at home, nor are there Sunday Schools where their children can receive instruction. The responsibility of religious instruction is thus laid on women who have neither the training nor the energy to face the task. Many suffer from great loneliness. Tied to the farm by domestic work for children, husband and farm hands, even if roads and trails are good, they can seldom leave the homestead, and the life tends to be more cramped than that of the men. The report calls on the Church at home to aid the Dominion Churches in meeting the need of such settlers by providing additional clergy and laymen and women for work on the prairies and in the bush where great distances, shortage of funds and increasing population have made it impossible to keep pace with the need. The report quotes Lord Forster speaking on Western Australia, and the words hold good for other parts of the Empire:—

"If you believe, as I believe, that without a definite basis of religion no one can attain to a full measure of happiness, you will realise how vital it is to provide for the spiritual needs of our people who make their new homes in the hitherto unsettled parts."

Besides settlers in the Dominions there are women in tropical areas who, though they do not do the heavy labour of their Dominion sisters, face a difficult life. There is a considerable group of domiciled Europeans in India who cannot afford to send wives and children home. There are the half caste communities in various parts of the world, standing on the fringe of two races, often welcomed by neither. Besides those who live permanently in tropical areas there are the wives and dependents of men in Government service or in commercial firms. All are in an environment where material odds are heavy against the deepening of spiritual life. Then there are sojourners in Europe and the Near East, taken there by business or pleasure. The report gives a panorama of British Communities abroad. In all women have special needs—needs which are not met.

The second reason why the report is of special importance to women is that on women rest heavy responsibilities. Women go from these shores in the great dispersion of our day and generation to play an important part in developing the life and standards of the parts where they settle. They are often living in areas where race touches race, where fear of competition between races dominates society. If they are arrogant, short-sighted, irresponsible, the prospect of building inter-racial relations grounded in understanding and co-operation is small. If their standards of life are low they do infinite harm among people of other races; if high, they may do infinite good. In Canada they are faced with the problem of welding into

a nation immigrants from many lands. While previous reports have shown the necessity of supporting missions, this report raises the far wider question of the part British people are playing in the world to-day. It shows plainly that the missionary responsibility of the Church to other peoples cannot be fulfilled unless British people abroad are alive to spiritual issues. For the sake of the world as well as for the sake of our people overseas, the report pleads that the sources of spiritual life in the Church may be at the disposal of our kith and kin who travel far afield. In the spiritualising of our contacts with peoples of other races and nations, women must play a prominent part. The report makes it very clear that no official action of societies will take the place of sound personal relationships between our people overseas and their neighbours.

Thus the report makes a special appeal to women on the double ground of the need of our women overseas and of the responsibilities they have to face in the modern world.

At this point our eyes are turned from far horizons to familiar landscapes. The part women play abroad will depend in the main on the preparation they receive at home. Will their spiritual life survive the searching test of loneliness, of material pressure, of contact with other races? One is driven to face the great problem of religious life and teaching at home. So far as special preparation goes the report raises the question of how far the Church is helping those who go overseas to develop their personal devotional life so that they will be able to face conditions where the sacraments and services of the Church are only available at long intervals. Dominion churches report that our people are not trained to give. They have been accustomed to an established Church with endowments, and are slow to shoulder financial responsibility when a Church is supported by the donations of parishioners. The question is raised as to how far mothers are trained to teach their children—a responsibility which falls on them when no other agency is available. Thus the report challenges the Church at home not only to meet the need of communities overseas, but to consider quality of religious life at home.

It is inevitable that from these shores men, women and children will go out in increasing numbers year by year. The state is offering help to emigrants. The report asks whether "There is a danger lest we should think on a lower level as Churchmen than we do to-day as citizens." It is the Church's responsibility to see that spiritual values shall control material circumstances. The report shows that this responsibility is not being fulfilled. It asks for workers and for far more than workers. It asks that the claims of the Church abroad shall be considered side by side with the claims of the Church at home, and that both shall be met.

Letter to the Editor.

Sir,—The letter of the Archbishop of Canterbury in last issue, as an explanation why the proposed "Office for the Making of Deaconesses" was dropped from the Second Edition of the Revised Prayer Book, appears to be, in my humble opinion, singularly unconvincing. Your editorial comment was that the letter "explains the situation, about which we were in some doubt." Please allow me to suggest rather that it makes the situation more doubtful than it was before.

His Grace says that they, the Bishops, had learned that "Quite solid technical objections would be raised to the introduction of an office so important which had not been before the House of Laity," in previous proposals; therefore they were compelled to withdraw it. Yet there are still in the proposed Deposited Book at least two other "offices" which had not been submitted in the previous drafts. I refer to the Exhortation to be used in Advent and Lent and the Devotion before the Celebration of Holy Communion. If it is to be said that these are not such

important innovations as would be that of the Office for Deaconesses, it may be agreed; but if so, why then should it be suggested that this Office may be issued as a Special Form along with, say, that for "Consecration of Churches, and possibly some others,"—presumably the dedication of organs and graveyards and the like? Are we to assume that the enlargement of the personnel of the Ministry of the Church is only on a level with the dedication of certain pieces of wood and stone?

It is, indeed, greatly to be desired that the implied hopes of compensation for this withdrawal, held out by His Grace, and supported elsewhere in a letter by the Bishop of Winchester, will materialise in something really far more adequate than what is thus forecasted. If it has so happened in order that women may be made Deacons (not *merely* Deaconesses) by the alteration of the existing Ordinal to allow of both sexes on the same level, according to Paul's great words of "neither bond nor free, male nor female," then indeed the withdrawal of the "Office" will be more than justified, and many earnestly hope it may be so.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN DARBYSHIRE,

Member of L.C.M. Committee.

68, Belgrave Road, S.W.1.

Executive News.

Since April the L.C.M. has been co-operating with the Equal Political Rights Committee and has held open-air meetings on Hampstead Heath. Miss Auld has, in spite of difficulties in securing speakers and chairmen, managed successfully to keep each of the L.C.M.'s undertakings and the League's special aims and objects have been brought well to the fore at every meeting.

Arrangements for the Church Congress are well in hand, thanks to the energy of Mrs. Pollard and Miss Hammick. We have been fortunate enough to secure the help of Canon Raven, who has promised to speak at the meeting the L.C.M. is getting up. There is to be a special discussion during the Congress on the Shortage of Clergy and no doubt much will be heard of the urgent need for more candidates for the Sacred Ministry.

Ipswich has already had convincing evidence on more than one occasion of the great service women can give to the Church of Christ. May we hope that Ipswich, with the vivid memories of Miss Royden's Crusades, and the L.C.M. together may be able to console those who grieve over the steady decrease in the supply of ordinands and open their eyes to the obvious remedy?

Miss Jessie Bell is most kindly undertaking for the present the work of Overseas Correspondent. We are very grateful that so valuable a piece of work is to be carried on.

During the last quarter the following new members have joined the League:—Miss C. M. Riches, Miss Catherine Shore; Miss Ethel Haslam, a former member, has rejoined.

SYBIL PRATT, Hon. Secretary.

The Treasury.

(Money received from April 1st—June 30th, 1927.)

	£	s.	d.
Subscriptions	63	7	6
Donations	4	7	7
Subscriptions to, and Sale of, <i>Church Militant</i>	8	7	2
Literature Sales	0	16	6
Helen Hanson Memorial Fund	0	10	0
Gippsland Fund	7	16	0
Church Congress Fund	17	9	0
Sundry Receipts	1	4	0

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