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PROLOGUE

Written for the Scala Theatre Matinée, November 12th, 1909

NO Cause is great that is not hard to gain,
No right so clear as not to be denied:
Else, in the past, no martyrs had been slain,
No prophets stoned, no saints by torture tried.
Backward we look, and see the wrong confessed,—
Forward—and lo, to other wrongs are blind:
And at our doors new wrongs stand unredressed,
Needing the martyr's faith, the prophet's mind.
These were the few: they bore the scorn and laughter,
The mockings and the ribaldry of men;
But where they fell a mighty host came after,
And from each heart that died came strength for ten.
They were the few: they waited not for numbers—
Forward by faith they went, and fought the fight;
Till at their sound dull souls woke from their slumbers:
The lame feet leapt, the blind received their sight.

This is man's way: high justice he is blind to,
Till, for a sign, the blood of martyrs slain
Marks as his own the Cause he proved unkind to,
Till in another's loss he learns his gain.
Blind, blind he goes: and round his head a glory—
Wings full of eyes, the witness borne of old:
Heroes, and saints, and prophets, hearts whose story
Now warms a world which to their Cause was cold.

Hear, and give heed! When, when did land or nation
See without persecution, Freedom born?
When did the many ever find salvation,
Till some had known the spitting and the scorn?
No Cause was ever won but first was mocked:
No Faith taught hearts to dare but first was hated:
No gate stands wide, but at one time stood locked:
No right found rest that was not first belated:

O England, land of lights which round thy shores
Fling guiding fires to mariners far at sea:
England, dear home, with the wide open doors,
Where first in all the world the slave was free:
Out of thy past thy present! From thy blood
First of all lands and loudest comes this cry:
We are thy daughters, born of fire and flood,
Fearless: and these signs men shall know us by.
We are thy daughters: of no lesser breed
Could such a cry for justice first have come,
Or such strong odds be faced! 'Tis England's need
Which bids her women now no more be dumb.
We cry for justice! and lo Justice stands,
Still with unlifted sword and balanced scales;
While in her Courts blind Hate, with blundering hands,
Smites with brute force, and yet with brute force fails!
O ye, whose laws have marred your country's fame,
Take heed, and yield to Justice her award!
Hands off our Women! Oh! hands off, for shame;
Lest now into the scales she throws her sword!

LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

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ADDRESS
A MAUDE ROYDEN

THE SPIRIT OF

THE

PIONEER

*"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in
the bond of peace."—Ephesians iv. 3.*

BY

A. MAUDE ROYDEN.

Published by

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Room 9,
55, Berners Street,
Oxford Street.

ADDRESS

GIVEN BY

A. MAUDE ROYDEN

AT

ST. GEORGE'S, BLOOMSBURY,

JULY 3rd, 1920.

For their sakes I sanctify myself.—St. John xvii. 19.

WE are trying to-day to establish a great principle, or at least to carry on the application of a great principle for ever established by our Lord Jesus Christ, in the governing and administration of His Church and as an example and pattern to the world.

We feel bound at these times to go forward, and to remember and realise more clearly than in the past, that as in Christ there are no distinctions of race or of class, so also there can be no distinction of sex; and as in spiritual matters there is in Christ neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, we try to-day to bring this principle before the Church and the world, especially in regard to the ministry of women.

It is a right thing always, to try to establish the principles laid down by Christ, but it is always rather a difficult thing, and spiritually a dangerous thing, to be a pioneer. It is always right to establish a right, but it is always difficult and dangerous to claim a right, and this great principle must be established through

individuals and must be in one sense the claiming of a right, even if it is only the right to serve. Before, therefore, we go out to lay this claim before the world, let us realise how difficult it is to be those who in any particular reform are called to lead the way. Those "whom the Spirit's dread vocation severs to lead the vanguard of His conquering host" must always realise that it *is* a "dread vocation," just because it is extraordinarily difficult to be doing something that is new, and asking for something that seems to be something for oneself, without spiritual loss. We are asking to-day that at least in the lay ministry of the Church we shall be given a definite place, and that we shall take a more prominent part in the services of the Church; that we shall be allowed to read the lessons, to take part in the services of the Altar, and to preach. All these things mean that we are claiming that the Voice of God can speak through us. It is even to claim that the Voice of God *is* speaking through us, and it is a tremendous claim; and just when you desire most, and need most, to forget yourself entirely (for what you are claiming is not that *you* can speak, but that God can speak through you), at that time it becomes most difficult, because all the world is listening, criticising and blaming; because when you want to forget yourself, the world is not ready or willing to let you forget yourself. If in speaking of these difficulties I speak specially of preaching, it is not because preaching really differs from other duties from the point of view of which I am thinking this afternoon, it is only that it is perhaps the greatest in difficulty.

Any woman who claims any kind of right, any kind of prominent position, whether to sing in the choir, read the lessons, or preach, is in fact claiming to take a certain part in the services of the Church which has not been ours in the past and which must necessarily affect other people. You see, even to worship in the congregation means that you influence the rest of the congregation, and whether you listen or not, and in what spirit you listen, affects others. We are only beginning to formulate the science of psychology; but it has already taught us that the spirit of one person must affect the spirit of the rest, and whether it is easy to worship in a church or not depends very much on whether others are worshipping in a right spirit or not. One person who is not seeking God may create difficulties for all the rest. Even more is this true when you are taking a prominent place in the worship of the church, your influence, your thought, and your spirit of worship, is more important even than those of the people who sit in the pews. If you see a server at the Altar seemingly careless of what he is doing, his conduct affects you more painfully than that of an ordinary member of the congregation. So, when I speak of the difficulties of preachers, I speak of all who are taking a prominent part in the ministry of the Church, and I say to you that when you stand up to preach, every weakness, every cowardice, every fault and every sin strive to get between you and the things you are to say, so that your prayer can only be that God will not *let* you stand between the thing you have to say and the people to whom it is to be said. I think that

everyone who speaks whether in a church or on a platform,—if they care supremely for what they are trying to say, if they feel it is something transcendent, something greater than themselves—I think the only thing they *can* ask sometimes is that these clamorous faults, these intolerable weaknesses, of which everyone is conscious in his heart, will not be allowed to stand between him and those to whom he speaks.

There is a great prayer in the Bible that the speaker should not be allowed to deceive those to whom he speaks. It is a prayer for all speakers; for it is extraordinarily difficult not to be entangled by all the insincerities, all the cowardices, all the egotisms, all the injustices, that you have ever committed, when the one thing that is required of you is that you become a channel through which the Voice of God can reach the world. Then to be able to get rid of your clamorous self seems the one thing impossible, and after you have spoken, how often you realise that you did not get rid of that clamorous self, and the message entrusted to you was misrepresented simply because you could not stand altogether out of the way and let God speak through you to the people.

Now this is always difficult for a preacher, but it is especially difficult for a woman at this time, just because it is a new thing for us to do; and yet, how glorious if this controversy of ours can be waged in such a spirit that those who come after us should have nothing to regret, nothing to wish unsaid or undone; that people might realise in what spirit Christians can discuss, disagree, or convince each other.

I beseech you, whether this movement on which we are engaged should take long to reach its goal or only a short time, let us at least endeavour now to cast out of our minds all those hardnesses and ignorances, all that hatred, rebellion and angry resentment which so often disfigures controversy, and makes us think sometimes that no controversialist can possibly be just to those with whom he disagrees. Let us seek together to understand the minds of those who disagree with us. Let us remember the wonderful comment of our Lord, when speaking of the necessity of sometimes pouring new wine into old bottles,—how that anyone who has tasted the old wine will not like the new “because he says the old is better.” Let us realise the greatness of that tradition from which some find it so hard to go forward. Let us remember that those to whom the Church is something too divine to suffer change, have in their own experience found her so true, so divinely beautiful, that it seems to them a kind of profanity to believe that yet greater things are possible. If you have come into the Church from outside, or grown up without any great reverence for her customs, yet try now to understand what a wonderful tradition hers is. Do not under-rate the beauty of the traditions of those with whom you disagree. I think there is no greater ideal in any controversy than that which enabled Mr. Birrell to write of Cardinal Newman that he had “an unsurpassed power of putting his opponent’s case better than he could have put it himself.” It is not given to everyone to state a case as clearly or as nobly as John Henry

Newman, but I think at least we might remember this and learn from it to make an effort to understand those who oppose and disagree. I would say also—in case this battle is a long one, and, of course, in some parts it is likely to be a long one—do not let us ever get resentful. It is exasperating to have people trying to force you away from a tradition to which you are accustomed and which you really love; and if we find any opposition which comes from ignorance, or from prejudice, or sometimes even baser things than prejudice, let us be always capable of resisting prejudice and ignorance without being goaded into hatred and bitterness. Remember that no insult can possibly touch you and no baseness can ever smirch you; therefore it is well to be very gentle, very tactful and not in the least sulky when you meet any kind of opposition. Remember that you and I are also prejudiced, also blind and deaf, to many of the great appeals of the world.

I think if the reformer would look back and realise how, from the very nature of things, one must concentrate on the thing which has called him into the rank of reformers, and how because his time, his energy and his sympathy are enlisted, he must become to some extent blind and deaf to other wrongs, no reformer would ever become a prig, or feel so immensely superior to those who are not reformers! There are a thousand cries to which you and I are deaf; there are a thousand sufferings that future generations will remove that we do not even see; and, therefore, if to this one reform we give ourselves with great devotion, let us always

remember that to some other people we must seem as blind, as deaf and as hard-hearted as some of our opponents sometimes seem to us.

Let there be in our hearts a great conviction, for assuredly we are right. Let there be no possibility of hanging back, or of not claiming what we believe to be right; but let there be no bitterness, no resentment, no lack of understanding, no hurrying to defend ourselves. It does not matter what is said of any one of us. Let us bear in mind that it is given to us not only to win a great reform, but to show the world how it is possible to be devoted to a cause and yet just to those who oppose it; to be patient without discouragement; to be in earnest without injustice; to conquer without insolence.

Women and the Priesthood.

A VERBATIM REPORT

OF THE

PRINCIPAL SPEECHES AT THE DEBATE IN THE CHURCH HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, JUNE 6th, 1919.

Chairman:—

THE MASTER OF THE TEMPLE.

Speakers:—

Miss A. MAUDE ROYDEN, Rev. A. V. MAGEE AND OTHERS.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, we meet to-night to debate a question which excites great interest, as the number of those unable to get in has testified, and with regard to which opposed opinions are strongly held. I wish to urge alike upon those who may speak—I know there is no necessity to urge this upon the two principal speakers—and upon those who may express agreement or disagreement with what they say, that we meet as followers of Christ to try to discover by the help of the Holy Spirit how best we can choose ministers for the English Church. And we must avoid alike anger of temper and acerbity of speech. (Hear, hear.) I trust that the give and take of debate to-night will leave us good-humoured and courteous. (Hear, hear.) If it does we shall have no cause to regret this public discussion of the principles which make for true progress and onlookers will not condemn us for desiring the triumph of our own views rather than an understanding of how best we can work for the coming of the Kingdom of God. I ask you to stand for prayer.

(Prayer.)

I will just say a few words with regard to the conduct of the debate. Mr. Magee will open and Miss Royden will reply and each will speak for some 25 minutes. I then propose to throw open the debate to those who wish to advance their views. Each speaker must send in his or her name in writing to me and I shall not allow any one to speak for more than 5 minutes; at the end of 4 minutes I must ring the bell. I am sorry that speakers should be thus cut

short, but you will all recognise that the meeting cannot be prolonged indefinitely. At a quarter to ten I shall call upon Mr. Magee to reply and he will be followed by Miss Royden. We trust that the meeting will be over shortly after 10 o'clock. The terms of the resolution are:—

“That in the opinion of this meeting there are fundamental principles which forbid the admission of women to the priesthood.”

I call upon Mr. Magee.

THE REV. A. V. MAGEE: Mr. Chairman, Miss Royden, ladies and gentlemen, it is a matter to me to some extent of regret that I should be forced into a position of opposition to those with whom throughout my life I have been so much in agreement. I am no mid-Victorian supporter of the slavery of woman and the supremacy of man. I have been an advocate almost ever since I can remember of votes for women, and I rejoice as much as Miss Royden rejoices that they have at last come into their own and have won equal citizenship with men. But it is just because I believe there to be equality of soul between men and women, just because I believe that she can march with his intellect and move with his mind, just because I believe her to be the ally, the comrade and the friend of man, nay—and the opposition will forgive me if I quote St. Paul—just because I believe the woman to be the glory of the man, therefore I am unwilling that she should do anything which in the course of history should diminish that glory and take from her her own peculiar qualities and her undoubted powers. It is just because I do not believe that equality of soul means identity of function that I stand here to-night, forced into a position which I would gladly surrender if conscience permitted me and reason allowed. And I want Miss Royden and her supporters to understand that in the very first place it is nothing less than loyalty to Christ and His Church that puts me in the position in which I stand to-night. (Applause.) He paid, as no other has paid, honour to women; He called them—and, strange to say, it has been used as an argument against us—He called them for the first time in history to real ministries of love and devotion; He showed woman her true place in life, He raised her from being the chattel and the sport of man to being his equal in soul and his companion in spirit. But it is just because while doing that He stopped short of the priesthood, it is just because while doing that He made no woman an Apostle and no woman a member of the seventy, that it seems to me an almost conclusive argument that that is the will of God concerning her. And if you tell me, as I shall be told to-night, that the time was not ripe, that woman has evolved through the centuries and that what could not be granted to her in the first century may be fittingly granted to her in the twentieth, I reply—and I reply with the deepest sense of seriousness and responsibility—that if the time was ripe for a woman to be made the Mother of God then the time was ripe for her to be made anything that God willed. (Loud applause.) And throughout history the Church in her attitude towards women, in her official attitude towards women, has simply been following the example of

her Divine Master which if she would be true to Him she dare not and must not disregard. And, therefore, the point that I want to put next is this, that while the New Testament points against priesthood for women, not by word but by the divine example of our Divine Lord, no one can say that there is a gap or chasm between the example of the New Testament and the following of the Church. In the Church it is historically unprecedented that women should exercise priestly functions. I am quite aware that, for example, in the days of St. Cyprian, a woman did celebrate the Eucharist, but she was sternly reprov'd by the Bishop for so doing and her Mass was described as utterly invalid. (Applause.) I am quite aware that deaconesses administered the Chalice in the days of Charlemagne but I am also aware that it was roundly and strongly condemned by the Synod of Paris. (Applause.) In other words, you cannot build a precedent upon an irregularity and you cannot claim that that shall be continued in the Church which has been condemned by the Church. It is a question, then, *imprimis*, of authority. And it involves an issue which I would in all humility and I pray with all persuasion bring home to Miss Royden and her friends to-night. We have to look beyond the Church of England. This is no independent body, this is no isolated sect in Christendom, moving its own little way, cut off from the rest of the Catholic Church: we Catholics in the Church of England claim to be a clear and intense and essential part of the whole and undivided Church of Christendom, and to do something for which we have no authority from the undivided Church is to cut ourselves off from Catholic Christendom and that is an act of suicide which we dare not do. (Applause.) Progress, as the world counts progress, may be assured, but the reunion which is dear to the heart of our Lord and Master would be gone for ever. We should make ourselves at present a laughing stock in the eyes of the Western See but that would be of little moment compared with the disloyalty to the past, compared with the fact that we should be fighting against the whole and undivided guidance of God the Holy Ghost, and it is by the authority of the Holy Ghost that we stand or fall. (Applause.) I am quite aware that the doctrine of development will be brought forward this evening, if not by Miss Royden, at any rate by some of those who—I do not say it in a flippant mood—seem to find in the word “development” the same comfort which other people find in the word “Mesopotamia.” (Laughter.) For, after all, development—let me in all kindness warn those who do not agree with me on this question—development is a dangerous and two-edged weapon, and you cannot claim development for one set of opinions and deny them to another. You must be prepared for the development of the Western See if you claim development in the Church of England, and you must abide by it (applause), and you cannot claim the guidance of God the Holy Ghost for such development as may please you and deny it to St. Paul or to anybody else. Development must be, in the next place, development from something. At least the Western See has its own justification for its theories of development, it develops from something to something; but you cannot gather

grapes of thorns or figs of thistles, you cannot have development into a woman priesthood from a male priesthood; you must have a parent stock from which it can spring and in this case it is wanting. (Applause.) It is the difference, to put it in one word, between evolution and revolution, and we claim in this case that it is not evolution, it is revolution, and you cannot have revolution until the whole Catholic Church has set its seal to it that God has approved of it. (Applause.) And I pass then from historical precedents and historical difficulty, merely remarking that to us Church people when I have said that, the question is closed, we cannot go beyond it, but I would merely venture to point out before I sit down that it is just possible there may be reasons behind the judgment of the Catholic Church and behind the will of Almighty God that have made this prohibition against a woman priesthood a thing that we dare not disregard. I will venture to say, though I have incurred some odium for saying it elsewhere, that this would be morally inexpedient. I cannot forget—who indeed can? and I say this, please believe me, in no spirit of flippancy; the thing is too great, it is a matter of life and death for us, remember—I cannot forget that already the sex question has too much invaded the Church of God. (Hear, hear.) Already that peculiar combination of faith and flirtation which the French have called *folle de sacristie* is too much with us. I ask you, are you going without the gravest necessity to increase the risk of that kind of thing? That is the question and that you cannot get away from. (Cries of "Shame" and applause.) It may be a shameful thing that you cannot get away from the sex question, but the shame of it does not rest with us. We cannot help it; we are made as we are and life is as God has settled it.

Then I pass to the question which I suppose weighs with many—I would it didn't weigh quite so much—weighs with many from the merely practical point of view. I honestly doubt whether what is proposed can ever be religiously effective. I am told that the religious effectiveness of women will be increased if she gains the priesthood. In answer to that I would ask you just for a moment to cast your eye back over history and think of the saints, the women saints, who have changed and fashioned the life of empires and who would have shrunk with horror from claiming the priesthood for themselves. (Applause.) Was St. Catherine of Siena a religiously ineffective person? Did she not sway the destinies of Europe, did she not lead a Pope back to where he ought to have been, did not kings and emperors kneel at her feet and seek her wisdom? Could any woman to-day have the power which she had and the saintliness which she possessed? But she drew the world, not by a priesthood which she would never have claimed, not by the masterfulness of logic which she would probably have despised or the imperiousness of a reason of which she knew the little value, but by the spell of her spiritual instinct and by the power of her devoted example. (Applause.) I ask you, was St. Teresa a person spiritually inoperative, and yet her name is written for ever in the history of the Church. Were the great abbesses of English Saxon

life of no account in religion? Our great St. Hilda of Whitby, one of our Saxon saints, the noblest, the best, the most powerful of women, one to whom the saints of the North came for guidance—What would she say to-day of such proposals as this? I do not believe that this proposal could make women half as effective religiously as these saints of God had been in their day and generation. One word more and I have done. I would venture before I sit down to make this appeal to all my sisters in Christ here to-night. Some of you have been too apt to think that it is the Church that has suppressed your liberties and kept you from your freedom. Do you realise quite how false that view is? It is the Church through history that has been the emancipator of women and, much more, it is the Church that has been the protectress of the honour of womanhood against the lust and against the passion of men. (Applause.) It is the Church which has taught men—and only the Church, remember—to bow their heads in reverence before motherhood and womanhood, enshrined and glorified for ever in Mary most holy. It is the Church that has lifted you, yes, by the very narrowness of her restrictions and the very rigidity of her regulations to the position of honour that womanhood holds to-day. My sisters, it is Christ Who has emancipated you, in God's name be careful how you go against Him. It is the Church that has helped women to keep their honour untarnished; it is the Church which by her attitude on the divorce question has said once and for all that women shall not be made the sport and the plaything of the lust and the passion of men. Yes, and it is the Church of England which makes every man that stands in her house to call upon one woman to be the glory and inspiration of his life, to say this word before he weds her "with my body I thee worship." Is that the restriction of womanhood, is that the lowering of its freedom, is that the degradation of its life? It is the safeguarding of womanhood, it is the purification of motherhood for the glory of God.

And now, Sir, my task for the moment at any rate, is at an end. As an unworthy priest of the Catholic Church I lift my voice in humble protest to-night against that which I honestly believe would make her false to her Master and woman untrue to her sex. We have with us the great Catholic tradition, but we have something more to-night. I look to-night beyond this great gathering; I look to-night beyond this world itself into that world of unseen mystery and wonder where men and women alike shall give account for the exercise of their gifts and of their powers in God's own time, and I see that there is with us a great multitude that no man can number. It is enough if to-night we have their approval; we await the verdict of history. (Loud applause.)

MISS A. MAUDE ROYDEN: Mr. Magee, ladies and gentlemen, we are here to-night to discuss the fundamental principles which lie at the back of the Church's decisions in the past and in the future about the position of woman, and about the functions she should fulfil in the Church. I want to say that, for myself, I take very strongly the attitude suggested by Dr. Barnes at the beginning of the meeting—that we are here to consider best how to serve

the Church. And saying that, I should like to say to Mr. Magee that it is not really an answer to women to say "What would the greatest of saints have gained by being admitted to the priesthood?" There have been men saints who were not priests, and it would be equally fair to say "What had they to gain?" Evidently their vocation was not to the priesthood. And that St. Catherine of Siena served the Church magnificently (and was permitted to instruct the Pope in his duties) proves that it is possible for a woman to achieve even the greatest spiritual genius without ordination to the priesthood. But we should rather ask whether the Church did not lose something by excluding St. Catherine of Siena? (Applause.) We should ask, I think, what it is that makes it right and makes it serviceable to the Church, that *any* man or woman should be called to the priesthood? What is the vocation of the priest? We have all distinguished very carefully—and especially to-night I hope we shall continue to distinguish—between the vocation of the prophet and the priest. The prophet is one who has a message from God. The priest, what is his vocation? I suppose it to be a great passion for souls. A priest is one, one learns from the Ordination Service, who has to feed the people of God, who should have an individual love, a great absorbing passion for Christ's children, a great love of souls. Mr. Magee tells me that it is a tragedy that sex should come into this question at all. I confess that when he said that I thought he was making my speech rather than his own! (Applause.) It is indeed, because we regret that sex should come into the question of the discharge of a great spiritual office that we desire to see women given this office. I know there are women who suffer from the disease to which my opponent referred, *folle de Sacristie*. I also know that there are many women who are so filled with loathing at the thought of that attitude of mind that they sometimes will not go to a man priest for help even when they require help. (Applause.) I know from my own personal experience that there are women, there are girls especially, who will not go to a man for help; and such women are not those who would be the least serviceable to the Church. I also know from my own personal experience that they often go without help, they go without the kind of guidance that they need most, because of this. To ordain women to the priesthood would make it much easier for such people to get help, without laying themselves open to a charge which is hateful to them.

When we come down to fundamental reasons I hope you will allow me to consider some which my opponent has not raised because the debate is going to be open later to all of you and at the end I shall only have ten minutes to answer, so I want to deal both with his points and also with some which I know are in the minds of many here to-night. We are told for example that this great spiritual office of the priesthood is confined to the man because the great over-ruling Spirit of God is always assumed to be masculine and the pronoun that is used to refer to God the Father is always a masculine pronoun. Well, the pronoun that used to be used to refer to God the Holy Spirit was a feminine pronoun, and if we are

really going to base the decision on arguments from pronouns, I should like to know how this is to be explained. It is true that the belief that the Holy Spirit represented the feminine element in the Deity has largely been forgotten; nevertheless, it is a fact that women Deaconesses were said in the Apostolical Constitutions especially to represent the Holy Spirit. A curious trace of this belief still remains in the Apostles' Creed, where you will notice, we are told, that our Lord, Who was the only begotten Son of God the Father, was "conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary"; Conception is the female not the male function. But it is true that our Lord Himself, as we are reminded, was incarnate as a man, and He was the supreme Priest. Well, our Lord had to be incarnate in some kind of a body, and I notice that He did not impose on Himself artificial difficulties; He was born into that class of life into which the vast majority of human beings are born, He was born into that sex which suffered the least from restrictions in public work; but He Himself emphasizes again and again the fact that in spiritual things there must be no distinction of sex, and that sex is not an eternal or spiritual quality. We are to be, He says, not *eternally* male and female, but "as the angels of heaven"; and in dealing with women and men He dealt with them always in precisely the same way. It seems as though, reading through the Gospels, Christ had continually emphasized the fundamental spiritual equality, the fundamental spiritual likeness of men and women. He Himself was supreme Priest; why yes, He was also, in tripartite nature, Prophet, Priest and King, but the Church has long ago recognised that women can prophesy; the Church of England at least will not deny sovereignty to women, indeed she permits to a woman not only the sovereignty of the State, but the supreme headship of that part of the Church which we call the Church of England. (Cries of "No.") And that argument I think also affects the position laid down not long ago by the Bishop of Oxford, that the final reason against the priesthood of women was what he called "the natural headship of man." To argue that women must not be priests because man exercises a natural headship over them is indeed to come up against the whole feminist position. We cannot possibly admit the one point on which we are continually contending. But the Church herself has continually given authority to women; she has given them positions of real ecclesiastical authority in the Church, more commonly in the Middle Ages than now, but even to-day, as you know, the supreme head of the Church of England was once Queen Elizabeth, once Queen Anne, once Queen Victoria. (Cries of "No.") I am sorry if you don't like it, but it is a fact. If you would prefer that I should refer to the time when the Church was more nearly one than she is to-day, I remind you that the very latest authority, the Research Committee, reports that sex was no bar to the exercise of powers which included the regulation of double houses, that is to say, convents where there were women on the one side and a staff of priests and laymen on the other; the appointments of canons and chaplains and the oversight of lands and temporalities. "There

were cases of special personal influence, such as that of St. Hilda, whose learning and ability coupled with her high position in the State, gave the head of a religious house enormous power in matters of civil and ecclesiastical administration. Another case is that of St. Margaret of Scotland, who is said to have been the author of the most far-reaching changes and reforms in the Church. Certain abbesses of great religious houses exercised a large amount of effective control in ecclesiastical matters; they were not debarred from such administration because of sex; they had extensive disciplinary powers over their own communities of double houses." Women have already, and without involving the priesthood, held in the Church positions which, as the Report says, gave them "wide ecclesiastical as well as civil powers." (Applause.)

But it is argued that there is a fundamental difference between men and women, a difference which while it allows women to discharge all the duties that I have spoken of, even those including the exercise of authority, does not admit of their admission to the priesthood. (Hear, hear.) When you have said that there is not between the sexes identity of function, although there is spiritual equality, you have not yet settled the matter. You have got to prove that that difference, which everyone admits, is a spiritual difference, and therefore one which applies to an office. Merely to affirm that there is a difference of function is not to prove that that difference applies to the priesthood. (Hear, hear.) You must go further and show that the difference is one which applies *at this point*, and here we must, I think, get back to the teaching of Christ Himself. What difference did He recognise spiritually between men and women? I will be bold enough to affirm that He recognised none. (Hear, hear, and applause;) that He made women prophetesses and priests. (Cries of "No.") Of all the startling statements that have been made in this connection I think the one that our Lord ordained an exclusively male priesthood is the most astonishing. It is made so frequently that it seemed to me worth while to give a good deal of attention to this particular point. Now, we all desire, however much we disagree, to conform more and more closely to the ideal laid down for us by Christ. (Hear, hear.) And our Lord's attitude towards women was, I think, exemplified in the fact that when, and if He ordained a ministerial priesthood during His life here on earth, He gave the commission, imparted the Holy Spirit to the whole Church, men and women alike. (Hear, hear.) If you will look in St. Mark you will see that He spoke "to the eleven"; if you look in St. Matthew, you will find again that He gave the commission and the ministry "to the eleven"; if you look in St. Luke you will find that He gave it to the eleven "*and them that were with them.*" If I may read you the passage, in the 24th chapter. The two disciples who had met our Lord at Emmaus returned to Jerusalem "and found the eleven gathered together, *and them that were with them.* And as they spoke these things, He Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. . . . And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power

from on high." Now, if you will look in St. John, you will find that our Lord, when it was evening on the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were, came and stood in the midst. "Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." That is to say, the disciples. Modern scholarship, I believe, is unanimous in saying that that included all the faithful, the women as well as the men. When the actual gift of the Holy Ghost came, it was given to all the Church. "When the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. . . . and it sat upon each one of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. . . ." Of all the strange misunderstandings that have crept into this controversy, I believe the one that our Lord gave this great commission about the retaining and the remission of sins to the eleven only, or to men only, is the most extraordinary. All modern scholarship agrees that those who were gathered together in that upper room were men and women. Our Lord gave to the whole Church the power of binding and loosing. The Church is to call to that office those who have a special spiritual vocation. Our Lord said nothing to suggest that only men could have that vocation, but gave the commission to the whole Church, women being present as well as men. We may suppose that among the women as well as the men there were some with the vocation to the ministerial priesthood. (Applause.)

Now, I want to say just one word about the question of the position of our Church as a branch of the great Catholic Church of Christ. Re-union is with me a passion, and I desire to see it not only on the one side, not only on the other, but with all Christian people. (Hear, hear.) To me it is frankly amazing that so many Christians should be so indifferent to our Lord's last prayer for us that we should be one, even as He and the Father were one. And I want to see reunion of all Christendom, East and West, and all of the Churches here in England together. (Applause.) But how are we to seek for reunion? Surely there is only one bond of union, and that is the truth. We shall approach one another in proportion as we approach the ideal of Christ, and, therefore, whatever question of reform comes up it must be decided not first in consideration of whether it will promote or debar unity, but solely in proportion as it advances the Kingdom of God. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I say this in the interests of reunion for I believe that those following a false track who imagine that we can achieve unity by each clinging to the errors that we happen to hold in common. (Applause.) If it seems to us that a certain course brings us nearer to the mind of Christ, conforms us more perfectly to the Church as He would have it, we are then bound to take that step forward in the belief that it must lead ultimately nearer to union. In that way the Church of England acted in the sixteenth century. Some of you may regret that she did so but, if so, I

suggest that it is not I who should leave the Church but you. It is an historical fact that the Church of England did precisely what Mr. Magee says we must not do. She did, without the authority of the whole of Christendom, institute far-reaching reforms, make wide and fundamental changes, and she did so because she believed—as some of us believe to-day—that in proportion as we conform ourselves to the mind of Christ we shall reach real reunion. The Church of England abandoned the long continued and wide-spread tradition of the celibacy of the clergy. (Hear, hear.) I cannot myself accept an argument for my cause which Mr. Magee apparently does not accept for his. I must not be condemned for asking that women may be ordained because a woman ministry will be an obstacle to reunion, when Mr. Magee did not hesitate to ask a woman to marry him. (Laughter.) Though he must surely be aware that a married priesthood is a very grave obstacle to the reunion of Christendom. I see no agitation among my opponents to be rid of this obstacle, I see very little inclination in them personally to waive it. And my mind goes back to that great feminist and great Catholic, Miss Abadam, when she said that it was not so much the double standard of morals that worried her as the double standard of argument. (Laughter.) I contend that those who invite us to retain what we believe to be an error, on the ground that if we are patient we shall see reunion, are acting on a false assumption. To strive to unite the Churches of Christ by retaining what we believe to be no longer advisable and never to have been after His mind, is to seek to unite them with ropes of sand. There is only one bond of union and that is the truth, there is only one way in which we can approach one another and that is by approaching Christ. (Applause)

[The Chairman stated that the meeting was now open for discussion.]

CAPT. TOWNROE: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, will you allow a layman and a very young layman at that to dare to step in on this particularly thorny subject? There is a question which worries fellows like myself considerably when we try and look at the whole problem as impartially as possible. I have listened to the two speeches which have been made and in neither speech have I received any guidance to answer my question. Will either Mr. Magee or Miss Royden tell me, do they intend this woman priesthood in the Church of England to be celibate or not? That question is a fundamental question. If those who propose a woman priesthood propose a celibate woman priesthood, as I rather gather from Miss Royden's speech, then she goes much further than the Church of England and much further than other denominations in Europe. She returns to the old system of Vestal Virgins which existed in the time of Rome; but coming to modern times if it is a celibate woman priesthood it is open to various strong objections. We shall certainly have those who are trying to see the question fairly feel that a celibate woman priesthood are shirking their responsibilities. Again, I cannot quite understand Miss Royden's remark nor her scholarship with regard to the institution of a woman priesthood in the Gospels. Apparently the Holy Spirit has been rather dallying

in instituting this. Why has He waited 2000 years? If, however, it is the right thing in the course of modern development to have a celibate woman priesthood, is it to be terminable? If those who propose a woman priesthood propose that women shall have the same liberty as Mr. Magee had of marrying, then there are again obvious difficulties in the irregularity of the sacramental services and sacramental administration. We can all agree with Miss Royden in saying that certain girls prefer to go to women; but it is an obstacle to be a mother of a family and also the rector of a parish. Unfortunately, we know only too well in the Church as it is constituted at present the scandals which arise. What would happen to those delicate, sensitive, intellectual women for whom Miss Royden is speaking if such certain scandals were to arise?

The Rev. W. C. ROBERTS: I want to recall the audience to the resolution. (Hear, hear.) The last speaker, and partly I think Mr. Magee, were speaking as if we were asked to say that we wished to see women admitted to Holy Orders in the Church of England straight away. That is not what we are asked. We are asked to say that there are fundamental principles which make it for ever impossible, and that does seem to me a very serious proposition to put forward and one that cannot be supported without a very great deal of thought. We are all aware, I think, of prejudice on this subject. No one who wants to call himself a Catholic can, I think, ever, in a way, have wished this subject to be raised. I can remember for a long time swerving from it and dodging it. It is so clean against tradition and history and continuity; and I for one do think that those considerations of historical continuity and traditional order do not receive as much consideration in the Church of England as they deserve. But it is one thing to say that for reasons of that sort this question of admitting women to the ministry is an impracticable one; it is quite another thing to say that it never can become an open question. That is the proposal that is before us. Father Magee has spoken about the twelve Apostles and our Lord's commission to them exclusively. There are historical questions here, but it is clear that if it is valid it is valid against any Gentile being admitted to the sacred office. That being so, it seems impossible to make it an argument against the admission of women. What are alleged as really fundamental objections in the principles of the Church or the facts of nature to the admission of women to the sacred ministry? I thought it worth while looking up to-day what St. Thomas of Aquinas has to say on the subject. No one deserves, even to-day, the reputation of a real representative of the best Catholic thought and teaching more than he does and you will find a section of his works in which he deals with bars to Holy Orders. Some of those things are not practical issues, such as his decision that a boy who has not yet reached years of discretion can receive Holy Orders or his view, always maintained by the Church, that the shedding of blood prevents a man from receiving Holy Orders. But the first that he deals with is this question of being a woman. Before he lays down his case for saying that this is a bar he puts, as he always does, the other side and the arguments are, firstly, this:

that a woman can be a prophet and to be a prophet is a greater thing than to be a priest. Next, he says, the Church has always admitted women to positions of rule and authority in the Church—for instance, in the government of religious houses—and they are capable of the great dignity of martyrdom. If they are capable of this, surely they are capable of the priesthood. And, thirdly, he says that in soul there is no sex and the priesthood is a spiritual office. (Applause.) How does he meet those and overthrow them? Straightaway by 1 Timothy ii. 12, that women are to keep silence in the Church and to be in a subsidiary position; by 1 Corinthians xi., reminding us that it is usual, and, apparently, he thought inseparable, from the sacred orders that there should be the tonsure, which would be against St. Paul's injunction that women should not be shorn. I ask you to notice that his whole argument rests upon this passage of St. Paul and he draws from it quite sweeping conclusions that a woman has the status of inferiority to a man, therefore, although she has all the moral and spiritual qualities for the priesthood, though all the external elements of ordination are performed over her, yet she would not be a priest. I venture to say that it is based upon a view of Holy Scripture and upon a view of the infallibility of St. Paul which it is impossible to maintain at the present day. (Applause.) You hear nothing there about this question of scandals and I am sure that that ought to be disregarded. (Hear, hear.) We all know that we have convictions and have a way of finding reasons for them afterwards, and sometimes they are reasons of which we are ashamed. But this is a practical issue for this reason. There are women—and I am not at the moment thinking of women who know Miss Royden or have been influenced by her—who believe themselves called not merely to preach in the Church but who believe themselves called to the Catholic and Apostolic office of the priesthood with as much reality as any man offering his services to the Church, desiring to say Mass, desiring to exercise the cure of souls under the keys of penance with all the humility, sincerity, and ardour that I have ever come across in any man. It was coming across people like that that made me feel that it was impossible to say "What you desire is profane and blasphemous," though necessary to say: "Of course, under existing circumstances you must stand aside, though I cannot say that it is not right and reasonable; that your offer is not one which the Church should be free to consider though feeling herself bound to give all right consideration to questions of history and tradition and order," but not to say: "This is a thing eternally impossible in the counsels of God." (Applause.)

Miss C. Grant, Miss Homersham, Mrs. Cheyne, The Rev. E. H. Cave, Mrs. Douglas Cator, and Miss Wilkinson also spoke.

MR. MAGEE: There are two things in a reply, one is that it must be brief and the other is that it must of necessity be disjointed. I say that at the outset to disarm criticism. I must take just one or two of Miss Royden's points and then, I think, leave the issue to the wise judgment and to the spiritual feeling of this great gathering which is here to-night.

Miss Royden spoke of the matter which I am sure she will

forgive me if I say is really rather a side issue, about the Holy Spirit representing the feminine element in deity. I confess it was all a little beyond me, but she will forgive me if I say that amidst all her arguments and her eloquence to-night it was not quite a solid contribution to the discussion. Because, after all, I think I have read somewhere that in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female, and therefore He is neither the representative woman only nor the representative man only but the representative of the whole of mankind in His one adorable Person. That, surely, does not bear and that cannot bear upon the regulations which He makes alike for men and women in the ordering of His Church. It is not an argument to the point.

I need not, I think, follow Miss Royden into those questions of the ecclesiastical title of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria, who were not really supreme head of the Church, but if you want to know I think the Master of the Temple repeats it in the Bidding Prayer every Sunday morning. Surely Miss Royden must know there is one Supreme Head of the Church, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Then I come to the real main question which still lies at issue between Miss Royden and myself, namely, the question of authority and of the New Testament. Now, Miss Royden has told you that in the Upper Room when our Lord gave His commission there were men and women. It is quite possible and, moreover, whether there were women or not does not very much matter because there were laymen, and we all admit that the priesthood is vested primarily in the whole Church, but the exercise of the functions of the priesthood must be by those who are ordained to do them. (Loud applause.) I am aware that in these days it is not popular to quote St. Paul, but I am not out for popularity but for truth, and if you want a picture of the Church of God with the divinely appointed ministry emanating from the whole body of the priesthood and yet exercising the necessarily ordained functions of it, you have it in St. Paul's picture of the limbs, the hands, and the feet of the body. You have the body and you have the hands, the whole body of the faithful priests of the most high God, but the hand is ordained to exercise the function on behalf of the whole body. The priest is the hand of the body, he is the representative of the body but he is divinely ordained to his office to fulfil it in union with and on behalf of the whole body. (Applause.) You will forgive that little sermon, but I must give you that much because it is the whole position of the Church. The priesthood is the priesthood of the whole body, the priest is the divinely ordained minister of the whole body and in union with the whole body. But I go one step further. Let us suppose, which is unthinkable, but for the sake of argument let us suppose that women had some sort of commission in that Upper Room. It is at least extraordinary that there is no trace of it in the Acts of the Apostles. Will you tell me why if women were ordained to be priests in the Upper Room the first thing the Apostles do is to defy the ordinance and the intention of our Lord, because there is no mention of women priests from the first to the last page of the Acts of the Apostles. (Applause.) Is it not strange that they

should have so soon forgotten His injunctions or so soon be unmindful of His intention. If this is so, then the Acts of the Apostles is to me an unintelligible book. Take one instance alone. "They ordained them elders in every city." There is not a mention of a woman ordained. Because, I presume, if we have female priests there must be female bishops and female archbishops. And then, when you have a record of Confirmation—and there are two records of Confirmation in the New Testament—why is it that St. Philip the Deacon preaches and baptises and they then send for two men Apostles to come and confirm. Why was there no woman ministry in the Acts of the Apostles? I am not speaking of prophets but of priests and you will not find a woman priest from the first to the last page of the Acts of the Apostles. (Loud applause.)

Then I pass in one moment to the Church at the Reformation. I think I may pass over that little gay hit, if Miss Royden will allow me to call it so, that little gay hit when she tells me that on a certain memorable day in my existence I forged an insuperable barrier to reunion between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. But I may pass, surely, to a more important point, because we all know that it is practically possible for Rome some day if she will to grant a married priesthood, but she has never given the slightest indication that she could for one moment grant a woman priesthood because her own Canons forbid it. And in all conscience you cannot place a woman priesthood and a married priesthood upon the same level.

About the Church at the Reformation. Miss Royden says that we did a good many things that made us independent. I grant it, but we did it throughout with the appeal to the ancient Fathers and the ancient Councils of the Church (loud applause), and if Miss Royden will read the Preface to the Ordinal in the Book of Common Prayer she will find there the appeal right back to the orders of Apostolic days, which are not to be begun but to be continued in this Church of England as they were in the beginning. We appeal to the past and we take our stand upon it, and it is in virtue of that past with all its glory, with all its inspiration, with all its claim upon our conscience, in the Name of our one Lord and Master that I ask you to-night to think wisely and to think well before you put into this Church of England that which will rend her in twain as nothing else has rent her, that which will bring discord where there might be peace. (Loud applause.) Because—I say it in all seriousness—I believe it would make of our religion a farce and of our worship a comedy. (Applause.)

MISS ROYDEN: It is perhaps not customary to ask the Chairman to take part in debate, but since Father Magee did appeal to Dr. Barnes, I appealed to him also, and I learn that my description of Queen Victoria is perfectly correct, and Dr. Barnes in the bidding prayer describes the sovereign as "in all cases ecclesiastical as well as civil within his dominions supreme."

Now, I would remind Mr. Magee that I am not trying—though I should greatly like—to convert him *alone*; I am obliged in my arguments to deal with others, who are impressed by arguments

which do not appeal to him. The argument from pronouns does not appeal to me, but when I find it seriously put forward by such a man as Father Pinchard, courtesy requires that I should deal with it. I am, however, glad to learn that Mr. Magee at least abandons the argument of the masculine God, of the masculine Christ, and of the upper room, admitting that our Lord in that great commission was in the presence of women as well as men, and it cannot be suggested that He deliberately excluded them.

MR. MAGEE: I only said "admit for the sake of argument."

MISS ROYDEN: I believe you will find that practically all modern scholars, whether on my side or against, are of opinion that there were in the upper room women as well as men. I hold with Father Magee that the commission of Christ was given to the Church as a whole, that He then gave to us the priesthood of the laity, leaving it to the Church to decide who should be commissioned to the ministerial priesthood. That being so, how comes it that the Church did not immediately ordain women? Is it possible that the Apostles can on so vital a point have been mistaken? I suggest that it is possible that they did not then see all the implications of the great principles laid down by Christ, that it has taken hundreds of years, (Cries of "No.") and that we are not yet at the end of those developments. (Applause.) I will remind you that the Apostles, the whole eleven of them, made a curious mistake right at the beginning. The women came and told them that our Lord was risen. They "told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. Now they were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James: and the other women with them told these things unto the apostles. *And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them.*" (Applause.) I want to take my stand on this question finally of tradition. Mr. Magee says that we can include anything we like under the word "development," but that does not make it a real Christian tradition. Tradition is to me a wonderful and sacred thing. The great historical Church of Christ seems to me a great progress forward towards the truth, in fulfilment of that great promise that Christ our Lord said to the Apostles: "I have many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now," for He promised us that the Holy Spirit should lead us into all the truth. And He gave us as a test by which we should judge what was a right or a wrong development, the standard of Christ Himself. St. Paul warned us that we should test even his own teachings by the principles laid down by Christ, and I contend that tradition and respect for tradition does not mean that everything was decided at once, that all the implications of our Lord's teaching were immediately understood. If that were so, why should He promise us the Holy Spirit to lead us into the truth? But "tradition" means that every advance must be tested as a right or a wrong advance according as it is after the mind of Christ; that this is the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints; but that we are ever to seek to enter in to a deeper understanding of it and to believe that we have the guidance of the Holy Spirit in doing so. Right at the beginning of the Church this difficulty

about human relationships had to be settled. St. Paul laid it down once for all that Christ came to break down the middle wall of partition between classes and sets of human beings. He said "You cannot rule out the Greek; you cannot force the Gentile to accept the whole Jewish tradition; you have got to break down this middle-wall which Christ Himself came to do." To all the other Apostles it seemed at first as if St. Paul were simply destroying the Christian Church, but he appealed always to the truth behind the possibly false development of tradition, as our Lord did on the subject of the keeping of the Sabbath. He said, "Behind this law of the Sabbath is the law of God, and to make your tradition an obstacle to the fulfilment of that law, is to make the Word of God of none effect." St. Paul said, "Christ came to all men, and there is no difference between Jew and Greek." In his most inspired moment he laid it down as an eternal principle that "in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free." But he still left the slave in his position of slavery; he did not teach that our Lord's doctrine of fundamental spiritual equality should make it impossible for a Christian to hold property in the body of a Christian; he sent a runaway slave back to his master, urging him to remember that they were brothers, but never suggesting that it was the duty of that man to set the slave free. Why did it take the Church hundreds of years to realise that slavery was wrong? Many good and sincere Christians have pointed to St. Paul himself as a proof that slavery was a divine institution. It took hundreds of years for the Church to realise that in Christ there is neither bond nor free. I do not know how long it will take for the Church to realise that in Christ there is neither male nor female, but that this realisation will come I am absolutely certain. (Applause.) I cannot be asked to sacrifice the position of women because we may not sacrifice, we dare not sacrifice, what seems to us the necessary conclusion of the teaching of our Lord, and we women who are claiming the priesthood, not necessarily for ourselves, but claiming that the Church should open it to women who have the vocation, we who do this believe ourselves to be the daughters of the great Catholic tradition of freedom: we believe we are the spiritual children of that great teaching that in Christ there is neither male nor female. You cannot appeal against us to tradition because we believe we are the heirs of that tradition. We claim that it is Christ our Master Whom we desire to follow, that when sometimes it seems as if we are setting aside the tradition of men, we do it, as our Lord did, not to destroy but to fulfil. And when we see women who were admitted to the foot of the Cross shut out from the Sanctuary of the Church, when we hear that women must not minister to the Church who ministered to Christ Himself, it seems to us that those who refuse us make the Word of God of none effect through their tradition. (Applause.)

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"Except the Lord build the House their labour is but
lost that build it."—Psalm cxxvii., 1.

SERMON

Preached by

A. MAUDE ROYDEN

in the

CATHEDRAL AT GENEVA

On the occasion of the Meeting of the
International Women's Suffrage Alliance.

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WOMEN, THE WORLD AND
THE HOME.



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A. Maude Royden.

INTRODUCTION.

ENGLISH readers will, I think, be interested to know that although Geneva has no women preachers, and Switzerland has not yet emancipated her women politically, the Cathedral Consistory decided to invite me to occupy their pulpit by a unanimous vote. It was the more remarkable that this pulpit was the pulpit of Calvin, this cathedral the mother-church of the Reformation. S. Pierre of Geneva is far more than the chief church in a Swiss city: it occupies a primacy among the Reformed Churches of Europe. To be asked to preach there is no small thing.

Why was I asked? Because the International Women's Suffrage Alliance was to meet in congress at Geneva that week, and the President of the Swiss Auxiliary asked the Consistory to allow an opening service to be held in the great cathedral, and a sermon preached. I believe that the members of the Consistory felt that, at such a time in the world's history as this, if women felt that they had something to say, they should be heard. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth."

Nothing could exceed the kindness of the Cathedral authorities. They sent a representative to the cathedral on Saturday to welcome me, to show me over the building, to try my voice from the pulpit, to direct me how to pitch it (the acoustics of S. Pierre are very difficult). They told me to seat myself in the quaint old-fashioned

chair that stands in the pulpit on Sunday.* "Now," they said, "you are in Calvin's pulpit, sitting on Calvin's chair." "What would Calvin say if he were alive?" I asked. "If Calvin were alive now," they answered, "he would know that it was right!"

E pur si muove. The world will listen. The women have something to say. For an hour they made me their voice. It was a great, a most moving experience. But "the wind bloweth where it listeth." Will the Church realise that—or shall I not rather say—*remember* it? "The fact that a woman preaches at S. Pierre is not a bold innovation, nor a betrayal of Christian principles: it is a return to the glorious liberty, the lofty fellowship of souls of the first believers."† And the most precious memory of all that Geneva has given to me, is to know that, though I was the first, I shall not be the last woman to preach from that world-famous pulpit.‡

A. M. R.

* During the week it stands at the foot of the pulpit so that visitors may see it.

† *La Semaine Religieuse*, May 29th, 1920.

‡ "Un a pu lui répondre qu'elle-même a ouvert une voie dans laquelle d'autres s'engageront peut-être."—*La Semaine Religieuse*, June 12th, 1920.

Women, the World and the Home.

Except the Lord build the house their labour is but lost that build it.—Psalm cxxvii., 1.

IT is seven years since we last met, in the beautiful, but now tragic city of Budapest. Seven years! And since that meeting, how widely has our Movement spread! How many victories have we to record!

Seven years ago, few countries had wholly enfranchised their women; and among those few none were of the powers which in population, area, and wealth, count as "great." To-day there are millions of enfranchised women among the great and among the lesser powers; women in many countries voting on the same terms as men, and sitting side by side with them in Parliament.

And yet how little have we rejoiced over these victories! Who would have dreamed they could have come, so thick and fast, and brought with them so little of joy, so little of triumph? They have come, and we have welcomed them. But they have come through such a storm of pain, accompanied by such agony of loss, that we could not—we cannot even now—greatly rejoice.

I ask myself what has brought us here at all. Here we sit side by side, who have come from Iceland and South Africa, from India and America, from all the extremities of the earth, with such differences between us of civilisation and tradition, education and religion. Women of the most ancient races are here, with all the traditions of a great civilisation, rich in literature and art, religion and philosophy; and women of the youngest races, full of hope and vigour, with hearts unembittered

by experience, undaunted by disappointment. Nay, more than this, for we have had to cross not continents and oceans only, but that sea of blood, that abyss of pain, which since last we met has opened between the countries from which we come.

In the name of the God who made us, what do we here? What impulse has been strong enough to bring us together? What call loud enough in our ears?

It is not the world's need only. Men have felt that as well as women, and at the call of such a need have served not better but certainly not worse than ourselves. It is something more than a sense of the world's need that has brought us: it is a hope—a faith—that we women have some answer to that need, some key to the master-problem of humanity. We have seen a mighty and majestic civilisation crash to ruins about us. The world yet reels with the shock of it. But even as it reels, and wars still rage, we see our statesmen in every country preparing to re-build it on the same foundations, unconscious, apparently, of any error in their building, or hopeless of avoiding it in the future. We cannot be content with this—it is too hopeless, too despairing. If something better is to be made of the world, there must, to all the wisdom and statesmanship of the past, be added some new thing, some new wisdom, some new faith and knowledge. Can we give it? I believe we can.

We women come new to the business of world-building, world-thinking; but there is one work which has always been ours, one sphere in which we have laboured since the world began, one duty always expected at our hands. We are old in the work of making homes. From whatever quarter of the world we come, and whatever civilisation,

old or young, we represent, this wisdom is ours, part of our very being, ours from the beginning of things.

And this experience, common to women, has given them a certain knowledge. It is true that there is no sex in the spirit, for sex is not eternal as spirit is; yet since religion is life, not creed, our lives do influence more deeply than we realise, even our idea of God Himself.

This pulpit offers me an instance. It is the pulpit of Calvin, of a master-mind among men, one of those few whose powerful personalities and commanding minds have stamped their impress deep on Christian thought. Especially associated with the great name of Calvin is the doctrine known as the doctrine of the Atonement. This doctrine is one of the most moving in religious idealism; it is the supreme instance of divine tenderness. God reveals Himself to His perplexed and tragic children, in a human form—in Christ. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself," and not permitting that work to be defeated or delayed though "His own received Him not." There is not, surely, any conception of our Father, God, more profoundly moving or more tender than this.

And yet who will not admit that this great truth, developed by a long line of theologians—St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, Anselm, Luther, Calvin, Knox—has come at last rather to terrify than to move mankind? Supreme instance of the tenderness of God, it has become too terrible to be sublime; it is to-day one of the greatest obstacles in the path of those whose hearts turn to the Christian God.

How has this happened? It has happened as the result of a too legal conception of the relations of God

and man. This coming down of the Creator, drawn by the divine constraint of love, to His suffering creatures, has been hardened into a contract—almost a bargain. It has been conceived in the terms of the law-court, and God as Sovereign, Judge, Law-giver, Creditor, has appeared where God the Father was needed, if so divine a tenderness was to be understood.

Well, there are many parables in the Gospels in which God is so described. But turn from them for a moment to that parable I read just now—the parable of the Prodigal Son. Has any parable appealed so directly to the human heart as this? Is any so beautiful? Is any so well-known? Or does any seem in such short compass to contain so perfectly the heart of Christ's revelation? God is our Father; even such a Father as this; so perfect in His patience, love, and understanding, at once to the licentious lawless younger, and to the hard narrow Pharisaical elder son. "If all the rest of the gospels were lost," exclaimed an enthusiast, "and the 'Prodigal Son' alone remained, it would be enough. We should have the heart of Christianity."

Yet this greatest of all parables has been remembered and recorded only once. Only one of the four evangelists has set it down. Which? St. Luke—a man, it has often been observed, who had a singular understanding of and sympathy with women. But modern scholarship goes further than this. It affirms that long passages in the gospel of St. Luke were taken down from the lips, or perhaps even received from the pen, of a woman. The Mother of our Lord, Joanna the wife of Chusa, or perhaps the little group of women who ministered to Him, told the evangelist what they remembered best. He wrote

down what they told him, or one among them wrote and gave it him. And among these sacred recollections is the story of the Prodigal Son. But for a woman, it had been lost.

How natural it is! Men have forever been at making states, and passing laws, and enforcing them. God as Sovereign, Legislator, Judge or Creditor is an idea congenial to all their experience. But women have made homes, reared families. The conception of God as a Parent was natural to them; the parable of His love for His children met in their hearts a swift response.

For lack of this conception the world perishes. Again and again men have built up their magnificent civilisation, and again and again it has crashed to earth in ruins. "Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it." Who is this Lord? He is our Father: He is Love. Love alone can build, Love alone creates. There is no power that can create but Love.

We know this, we women. Shall we find courage and faith enough to proclaim it? For generations we have known it. We have sat long, as our mothers and our grandmothers sat, watching the fire burn on their hearthstone, the steam rise in the kettle. The hearth—the fire burning on it—is the symbol and heart of the home: to northern ears the singing kettle is the very sound of domestic comfort, domestic peace. All this is true, and we have known it. But there came at last the child of genius who taught us that in that fire and water, that gently singing steam that lifted the lid of the kettle up and down, there was a giant whose might could drive our trains across continents, our ships across the sea, and in factory and workshops heap mountain-high the material wealth of man.

The story repeats itself. We have made homes, and in them we have seen the creation of Love. We have known that Love brought children into the world, sustained and nurtured them, built round them their home. We have known that a home cannot be made but by Love. We have watched it work its miracles, solve our problems, bring wisdom and experience into the service of childhood and ignorance, teach strength that its noblest purpose is the protection of weakness. Whether we come from old or from new countries, from Iceland or from India, we women know this. It is wrought into the very texture of our souls. When shall we perceive that in this gentle spirit of love, which makes our homes, we have a giant—nay, a God—who can build worlds, raise up civilisations, bring the strong nation to serve the weak, and wisdom to care for ignorance? Who can solve all our problems, bring Life where Death was, and make the waste places glad? When shall we proclaim to the world our gospel—"Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it?"

No other power can create but this. When we read the first verse of our Bible—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," we should have known the conclusion of the whole matter—"God is Love." Women, in whatever spirit you have come here, whatever you have suffered, whatever of anger, bitterness or hatred your wrongs may have awakened in your hearts, now cast it out. You have come here to build: hatred builds nothing: it destroys. Women unmated, solitary, and sad, women whose husbands or lovers the war has slain, mothers now childless, women who have not borne and now may never bear a child, to you above all belongs the service of the

world. In none of you must the divine spirit of motherhood perish unused—it is too sacred, too precious, and the world needs it more than you dream. If you bear no little human child, bring to birth a new world. If the world is "powerless to be born," it is because there is not love enough to deliver it. Shall it appeal to motherhood in vain?

Convert our secret of the ages—the secret of every home—into a principle which statesmen must accept, a foundation on which a world may be built. They seek in vain, these statesmen, to make a League of Nations, unless that carefully designed machinery be moved by a real power. Already the whole construction threatens to crumble; already men cry, with glee or with despair: "The League is dead: it was still-born." It is as though men built a magnificent house and filled it with angry hating people—and then stood amazed to find that no one made there a home, but that the house itself was at first defaced and then destroyed by their strife.

Women of the world, unite! Give to the world your gospel of creation! Forget your wrongs, transcend your fears, breathe into this political machinery the power that alone can move it, into this League the spirit of Love. Turn to your supreme task and make of the nations a family, of all men brothers, and of the world a home. □

The League of the Church Militant

(Anglican),

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

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1. To urge the Church to fuller 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.

In obedience to this principle to pray and work for

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

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

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WOMEN AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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Women and the Church of England

His disciples . . . marvelled that He was speaking with a woman; yet no man said, What seekest Thou? or, Why speakest Thou with her?—JOHN iv. 27.

IT is claimed by all the Christian Churches that Christianity has had a great influence in raising the position of women. No one who looks East and West can doubt the truth of the claim. Under the influence of the five or six great religions of the world the position of women varies, and varies not only as religion but as races and civilizations vary. It is difficult to estimate how far each factor controls the result, and it is easy, by a careful selection of examples, to show that women even under Islam are better off than we in the West might suppose. Nevertheless there is no doubt in the mind of most of us that it is in Christian countries that the subjection of women has been most frequently and most successfully challenged.

This is natural. The teaching of Christ is in nothing clearer or more insistent than in the sense it gives of the value of the individual soul. Not Our Lord's words only but His whole life—and His death—bring home to us the sacredness of personality. And such teaching, however far we fall below it, leaves no room for the outcast or the "untouchable." Whatever may be

the faults of Christians, no one can read the Gospels as a whole and base upon them a claim to cast out any, either because they belong to an unclean race, a despised class, or an inferior sex. In the religion of Christ there is no room for our mean contempts, our unworthy prides. We are all the children of Our Father in heaven, and having been called to so supreme an honour, we must not stop to measure our infinitesimal differences.

This quality in our religion, though it is a hard saying indeed to most of us, has perhaps influenced our thought and moulded our civilization more than any other part of the teaching of Christ. There are many things in which the East compares favourably, or not unfavourably, with the West; there are many in which we resemble one another. But on this point—democracy—how fundamental is the difference! We, at least with our lips, admit the equality of all souls before God; and that our admission is more than mere lip-service is proved when slavery goes, when class is found instead of caste, and there are no “untouchables”; when neither women nor children are *merely* chattels, when the deep prejudices of class and sex and race are cut across by the great admission that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free.

And yet to-day there are insurgents in the Churches—and notably in the Church of England—who complain that “organized religion” has become profoundly undemocratic, and that this tendency is most strikingly shewn in that very matter of the position of women in which it has been claimed that Christianity leads the world.

In an inspired moment the Rev. William Temple asserted of the Labour Movement that the cause of unrest was not so much due to the desire of the working-man for shorter hours, higher pay, or any other administrative or legislative reform, as to his resentment against an attitude on the part of society which was “a perpetual insult to his personality.” Nothing could be more true, and it is as true of women as a sex as of the workers as a class. And here again it must be said that this insult is nowhere more perpetually or more intolerably felt than in the Church of England.

While in nearly all secular spheres of work the services of women are asked and given on terms nearer and nearer to equality with men, in the Church women are continually made to feel that they are not wanted. Everywhere there is an extreme anxiety to “get men,” coupled with expressions of contempt for those unfortunate clergy who are obliged to rely on the services of women. Everywhere it is assumed that responsible positions and important work belong by nature to men—even the least capable of them—and not to women, even the most efficient.

The councils of the Church—Convocation, the Representative Church Council, Diocesan and Ruridecanal Conferences, the governing bodies of Missions—all are filled, and *nearly* all exclusively filled, with men. Only the lowest and least of councils finds a place for women; and though they are now as electors to the Representative Council able to vote on an equality with men, they will not easily forget that in the first instance they might only vote if they were *ratepayers as well as communicants*. Before this astounding instance of male ecclesiastical statesmanship most of us

stood in silent awe. Only one¹ had breath enough left to point out that under its ingenious provisions the widow who thoughtlessly "cast in all that she had" would immediately have been deprived of her vote; while more prudent Sapphira, who kept back a portion of her goods, would have been welcomed on to the register.

As with the Church at home, so with the Church abroad. "That the bulk of the work of missions as done at home is in the hands of women goes without saying," writes a lady² whose devoted service to the Church is as well known as her lack of sympathy with the advanced wing of the Women's Movement. Yet her pamphlet, which is a plea for the greater share of women in the framing of policy and the administration of missions, is to the outsider, in spite of its studied moderation and courtesy, a damning indictment of the way in which they have been hitherto excluded. "In the Church's work, as exemplified by her missionary boards," writes Miss Gollock, the opportunity for women "to express the result of their knowledge and experience" is "except in rare instances denied." The decisions of the committees at headquarters "for the race are arrived at without recourse to one of its most important constituent elements." Yet it is not claimed—on the contrary, it is explicitly denied—that women take less interest in missionary work, give less time or money, do less work, or gather less experience. Only they are women, and so their help in positions of authority is not desired. The work suffers in con-

¹ Mrs. Paget.

² Miss M. C. Gollock, "Women in the Administration of Missions."

sequence, and the women of the last generations excused their rulers: "'They do not understand,' was the comment accepted by women for many years. . . . *Somehow this comment does not now satisfy.*"¹

As with the Councils, so with the offices of the Church. From top to bottom it is officered by men, and—incredible to relate—it is not even permitted to us to ask why! The mere question, "Why should not women be admitted to holy orders?" causes some Churchmen to cry out and cut themselves with knives, while others, more reasonable, assure us that there are indeed reasons, but of a character so "fundamental" as to prohibit their being put into words. With this it is expected that women—women of the twentieth century—will be content! But, alas! "*somehow this comment does not now satisfy.*" We desire reasons, and it seems to us nothing but a comedy to suggest that this desire is monstrous, and that no such question should be so much as discussed by the people whom it most intimately concerns. Where, then, have these gentlemen who deny us lived? In what little island of thought have they been segregated from the contagion and movements of modern life, that they honestly believe they can by loud shouting and abusive language silence the demand for reasons when any great monopoly is on its defence? It is possible that women have not the vocation for the priesthood; but it is not possible to persuade them that they commit a crime when they raise the question and ask for an answer. Nor will they consider their doing so as a "conspiracy."²

¹ "Women in the Administration of Missions," p. 8. The italics are mine.

² See the *Church Times*, July 28, 1916; Mr. Athelstan Riley.

The exclusion of women from all ranks of the priesthood is paralleled by their exclusion from nearly all other offices. Deacons, choristers, churchwardens, acolytes, servers, and thurifers, even the takers-up of the collection, are almost invariably men. If at any time not one male person can be found to collect, the priest does it himself, or, after a long and anxious pause, some woman, more unsexed than the rest, steps forward to perform this office. In one church, I am told, it was the custom for collectors to take the collection up to the sanctuary rails, till the war compelled women to take the place of men, when they were directed to wait at the chancel steps. In another it was proposed to elect a woman churchwarden, when the Vicar vehemently protested on the ground that this would be "a slur on the parish."¹ In another, the impossibility of getting any male youth to ring the sanctus-bell induced a lady to offer her services. After anxious thought the priest accepted her offer "because the rope hung down behind a curtain, so no one would see her." The propriety of women conducting the simplest of services or delivering an address from any part of the church excites in the mind of a section of the Church, not so much disapproval as hysterics. While everywhere women are gathering others together in halls, in drawing-rooms, in cottages, to join in intercession for their country, their Church, their friends, it is still in almost every diocese impossible for them to meet in the house of God. While every platform in the country is open to them, and every cause welcomes their service

¹ The lady who was, notwithstanding, elected is now popularly known among her friends and acquaintance as "the slur."

as speakers, in the churches only men must be heard. The pilgrims who go out on a pilgrimage of prayer, which should begin and end in the church of every parish visited, must give their messages in the school-room instead, where a grown-up congregation accommodates itself as well as it can to the uneasy desks and chairs of children. Conventions are held, but as they are held in cathedrals and churches, no woman, though she be an "Archbishop's messenger"—no woman, though she be indeed inspired by God—can take a part. If a reason is sought, it is conveyed in the answer, "The church is a consecrated place." The modern woman does not find in this statement a reason. She finds in it an insult, perhaps the most comprehensive that could be offered to a human being.

In the same spirit a correspondent in a recent correspondence in the *Guardian* quotes with approval the rule that, at Mass, women are "not allowed near the altar." Are there, then, "untouchables" in the religion of Christ after all? Were we wrong in supposing that in Him there is "neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free"?

There were women standing near the Cross when Our Lord was crucified. Is the Cross less sacred than the altar? or the crucifixion less sacred than the mass? Or will our brothers in the Church of England give us some reason for this "perpetual insult to our personality" other than the assurance that we are unthinkably wicked to resent it, and that it rests on grounds too good to be put into words? We do resent it. We find it intolerable that while the veriest little ragamuffin of a boy may "serve" at the altar, women whom we

revere as leaders, reverence as saints, are excluded. We find it a scandal that the most ignorant of young men may get up and admonish us out of the depth of his inexperience and unwisdom in the pulpit, while women at whose feet the world is willing to sit are treated as though it were a thing impossible that they should have a message from God or know the inspiration of His Spirit. We know they have such a message, and, like the rest of the world, we go where we may hear it. Why are the churches empty? Is it because they have too great an abundance of inspired speakers?

Our contention cannot now be answered by a quotation from St. Paul; for we know that that great apostle, if in one place he directed the Corinthians not to allow women to speak, in another, with equal clearness, told them what the women were to wear when they did speak. We know also that the quoter himself sets aside the authority he invokes whenever it seems reasonable to do so. The women of his church come unveiled, in spite of St. Paul. They wear gold and silver and braid their hair, in spite of St. Peter. They sit teaching in the Sunday School, in spite of the author of the Epistle to St. Timothy. They form public opinion on public platforms—even on church platforms—while bishops take the chair for them and priests sit in the audience. Is it not, then, a little comic—or shall I say a little late—to demand that women should yield a literal obedience to an authority so lightly set aside by their critics?

Or is it seriously contended that the literalism which we are assured is a grave error when applied to the Sermon on the Mount, becomes a duty when the speaker

is one of incomparably less authority? Let us speak boldly. The great work of scholarship has set us all free from the bondage of the letter, and it seems to us an act of hypocrisy, conscious or unconscious, that men should seek to scare us, like children, with its ancient terrors. Do they suppose that women read no biblical criticism? Do they suppose that women, alone in an indifferent world, "abstain from things strangled and from blood," as directed not by one apostle but by all of them together, blind to the fact that their brothers have "scrapped" these regulations long ago? Do they dream that we can worship this god whom they set up for us—a god who witnesses with complacency the "prophesying" of women in halls and schoolrooms, but is provoked to wrath if they prophesy in a church? or who meticulously observes whether a chapel is "consecrated" (when a woman may say "There is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God," but not "Give peace in our time, O Lord") or merely "licensed" (when she may say either or both without scandal)? or who is seriously concerned whether she enters the church with a hat or a veil or a bow or a wig or only her own hair on her head? This a god to worship? We cannot even respect him. We were not baptized into this religion of rules and of the letter, nor into Paul, nor Apollos, but into Christ. To this supreme Authority we appeal.

We find in the teaching of Jesus no suggestion of inequality between the sexes. On the only occasion on which He was challenged directly on this subject He is reported to have replied by demanding an equal standard from men and women. Elsewhere He appears to have ignored the traditional Jewish attitude towards women,

by treating them just as He treated men. It is not possible to isolate any words of His from their context and to decide from their character or their tone whether they were addressed to women or to men. There is no trace of intellectual condescension in His words to women. There is no hint that a woman's ideal must be different from a man's, or her work, or her sphere. The parable of the talents is unaccompanied by any warning that if a woman has a talent for public speech, or the gift of leadership, or a genius for teaching, she will do well to bury it in a napkin. "His disciples marvelled that He was speaking with a woman," but He talked to her of the deepest religious truths, as He might have spoken to St. John. He shrank from the touch of none, He received all who truly desired to follow Him, His eye fell without reproach on those who at the last stood by Him on the Cross. What a world of difference between all this and the close and stuffy intellectual atmosphere of our churches! between the Christ who appeared first to a woman on His rising from the tomb, and the Churchmen who forbid a woman to be "near the altar"!

And with this sense of difference in our minds, we women of the twentieth century appeal to the leaders of our Church to go forward. At first a leader in this as in other movements towards real democracy, the Church now has fallen behind and handed the torch to others. In public life, in the State and the municipality, in movements for social reform, in the Labour Movement as well as in their own movement, in non-Christian organizations often, women find a more generous recognition of their value, a greater readiness to work side by side with them, than they find in the Church. Is it

wonderful that they choose to give themselves where they can do so most freely, and work where their work is least hampered by petty restrictions and insulting prohibitions? There was a time when religious work was almost the only avenue for a woman's energies, but now the world is all before her where to choose. Are we wrong—we who are Churchwomen—in regretting *even more for the Church than for the women* their choice of other spheres of work than hers? "The ablest women of the day are not—with some notable exceptions—giving their lives in the direct service of the Church and, however valuable their service is to the nation, the loss of it to the Church is serious to contemplate."¹ Is that not true? And is it not disastrous? The churches are still filled (if filled at all) largely with women. But the leaders have gone or are going, and the young do not come. "The Church for her own sake, for her members' sake, and for the sake of those who through them might believe in God, should give every woman an opportunity of exercising all her gifts" (even if they be gifts of leadership—even if they be gifts of tongues). "No woman with her heart on fire to serve her generation according to the will of God should find her sphere more readily outside the Church than inside."² But women do find it so, and they go, not because they have ceased to love Christ, but because they do not find His Spirit in His Church, nor believe that in these petty restrictions, this grudging of opportunity, this insulting warning-off from holy places, there is anything in common with the spacious freedom of His teaching.

¹ "Women in the Administration of Missions," p. 6.

² Ibid.

If we are wrong, let our error be shown to us with reason and not with abuse; but let those who oppose our claims realize that we do sincerely base them on the conviction that it is we and not they who in this matter have the mind of Our Lord. We have not made our claims lightly or unadvisedly, and claims sincerely made in the name of Christ should be treated with respect, even if they be mistaken.

If, on the other hand, we are right, let the Church take action.

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THE CHURCH AND WOMEN

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THE CHURCH & WOMEN

An Address delivered at the Church of
St. Martin-in-the-Fields

by

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THE CHURCH & WOMEN

IT would be something of an achievement if we could raise the plane of the discussion of the position of women in the Church of Christ. The recent outburst of anger in respect of the permission which had been accorded to women, under very strict conditions, to speak to women in the naves of churches bore tribute not to the importance of the question, but to the fact that to a certain type of masculine mind, or to a certain type of mind of masculine person, women are still to be ruled by standards altogether different from those which apply to men. There was some justice in the contention which was made editorially by a Church paper that the Church of England did not possess sufficient powers of discipline to enable her to keep within proper bounds a concession or a development which, in itself, was quite legitimate. Though that contention was just, it is infinitely

pathetic. But the women may take heart. If the Church of England cannot control a development of women's work, she is equally incompetent to choose her hymns. There is only one authoritative hymn in the Church of England, and that is to be found in the Ordinal. No branch of the Catholic Church is so fond of hymns, yet she has never had the courage to issue a hymn-book. Mr. Lathbury pleaded for a revival of Convocation on the ground that this question of hymns was "one of the first subjects to which its attention would be directed." He declared that by this means we should obtain an authoritative and unobjectionable collection of hymns. That was in 1850, but we are worse off than ever. Hymns are given to us, as we say in economics, by private enterprise. Convocation has done nothing. Various books are used in various churches, and Birmingham Cathedral excels in using one hymn-book on week-days and another on Sundays—an unusual kind of Sabbatarianism. So, while the Church is

incompetent to control the employment of the services of women, she is equally incompetent to discipline the hymns which are characteristic of her methods of worship in this country. Women, as usual, are in good company. St. Paul's opinion of some of the hymns with which we are tortured would probably be more direct and more unmistakeable than his views on feminine silence. The conclusion, of course, is that, as the Church cannot discipline the use of hymns, no hymns should be used, and then the hymn-book and the services of women would be on an equality.

We can see the beginning of the difficulty most incisively indicated in Dobschütz's *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*. Christianity appealed, as it appeals to-day in India, especially to the outcasts. It appealed to slaves: it appealed to women who had followed dishonourable pursuits. The Gospel was preached to sinners, and by sinners it found most acceptance. So the Church had to face a difficulty. Should the honourable

matron, used to a strict morality, and to the seclusion which accompanied it, sit not only next her slave, but next a woman who was known by all to have been immoral? Freedom in public life and equality with men were conceded to the *hetaira*, while seclusion and subjection were prescribed for the honourable wife. The Gospel, in theory, recognised the full equality of man and woman in regard to religion, but there was an obvious difficulty in applying that full equality to the two classes of women who came under Christian influence. Should it entail for all a subjection and a seclusion, or should it entail a freedom and a frankness hitherto, in Pagan thought, associated with a class which even then was regarded as ethically, though not socially, dishonourable? "St. Paul insists on veiling as soon as the woman comes forward with spoken prayer or prophetic address, thus placing himself in what, admittedly, was a difficult problem on the side of subjection and seclusion rather than on the side of freedom and publicity." In other

words, the accidental and social characteristic of the honourable matron seemed to him to be desirable for the converted woman of the other class. We can see something of it at Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians, where were "the groves of Daphne and the rippling Orontes, thronged by the devotees of luxury." How could these women of Antioch be accepted for frank, open life in the membership of the Church at a time when frankness and openness meant sin?

That this applied especially to the Church in Corinth can be seen by a reference to Mr. Lonsdale Ragg's excellent history of the Church of the Apostles, from which I venture to quote:—"When we bear in mind the special circumstances of Corinth to which the injunctions in question were addressed, and the prominent part taken by women in St. Paul's evangelistic work, the case assumes a different complexion. Lydia, the Apostle's first convert in Europe, and Prisca, his hostess—more eminent even than her husband, Aquila—are among the

leading characters in the story of the Church, even as the faithful band of holy women grouped round the Blessed Virgin hold a high place in the Gospel story. Some of these were almost certainly among the recipients of the 'tongues of flame' at Pentecost, a sign of the truth enunciated by St. Paul himself that in Christ the male sex has no position of exclusive privilege." "There is neither Jew nor Greek"—so far we are agreed: "there is neither bond nor free"—so far, only yesterday indeed, Christianity has come: "there is neither male nor female"—to that we have not yet reached.

The influence which this antithesis of thought has had upon the history of woman's freedom is most remarkable. There is more than a hint of it running through the story of the drama. Browning tells us of it in "Aristophanes' Apology": "Why may not women act? Nay, wear the comic visor just as well; or, better, quite cast the face-disguise and voice distortion—real women playing women as men—men! Laws only let girls dance, pipe,

posture, provided they keep decent—that is, dumb." And as late as the day of Pepys we find that this spirit of subjection and seclusion affected the ladies in the audience: "When the house began to fill, she put on her vizard, and so kept it on all the play; which of late is become a great fashion among the ladies, which hides their whole face." Not all the ladies of that day were veiled. Within this churchyard was buried one, a favourite of the public, who, much sinned against, with all her art and overflowing affection, represented the other class. Not easily shall we overcome this ancient antithesis of thought. Moslem women, says a Moslem writer, are veiled because of the impurity of men. The theory of subjection and seclusion might well be examined with similar frankness of intent.

The world is breaking down the antithesis, or, rather, it is beginning to discover that the Pagan estimate of the relation of woman's freedom to man's trustworthiness is wrong. But in her essential treatment of women

the Church seems to hark back. It is not a question of women for the priesthood: that question cannot be reached until the Church has her discipline, until she has authorised more hymns than one, and at long length succeeded in electing her own Bishops. It is a question of attitude to women. One of the oddities of that great movement, the Oxford Movement, is its strange hostility to women. The choir-boy is a curious revival. In the days of bitter ecclesiastical controversy, I heard a churchwarden of what, in those days, was a High Church inform a friend, who made enquiry as to ritualistic progress: "We have abolished women." The piping boy in the farmer's smock seems to be a strange evidence of progress. It may be a seemly arrangement; it certainly is not a vital necessity. To some of us it is not at all surprising that there should be an anti-climax, and that some churches are bidding the congregations to sing, and even restoring a couple of men and women in the west end of the church to help the congregation to do so.

It is an amazing evidence of masculine superiority that a male child of six is fit to carry the incense, while a devout woman must not enter within the altar rails. It may be right. I do not doubt it. But I question if there is any authority for the exclusion of women from within the altar rails save when the tiles are being scrubbed.

It is very curious that the theory of the domination of man over woman does not realise that purity is a positive quality, developed and heightened by equal relations between the sexes. We see traces of the old theory in the poet's conception of womanhood in the Garden of Eden when Eve says to Adam: "My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st unargued I obey. So God ordains: God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise." Ibsen showed us once for all that the Doll's House theory, with all its pretence of protecting women, really meant something very different, just as the Chivalrous Knight who went to the Crusades

pretended that his particular care for his wife's chastity was in her interest, whereas it was in the interest of his conception of ownership. It was to protect her as being his property, and very much of the sheltering and guarding of which we hear so much to-day is based on the same fundamental misconception. The ideal of womanhood too often pretends to put wife and mother on a pinnacle, when it really means to surround wife and mother with the safeguards of masculine proprietorship. We have over-emphasized for our women-kind that particular type of dull righteousness which is evidenced by the women of our stained-glass windows. We have asked, for women, a different ideal of happiness from that which we ourselves would have. It is not the happiness which Professor Santayana describes as "the union of vitality and art," but a happiness which is content to be placid and inert.

There is something of the same grimly mistaken idea lying at the root of the current Christian attitude to that most hideous of

social problems. The sinning woman is an outcast. If there is one subject above another on which our Lord and Saviour's teaching was perfectly clear, it is surely this. "Go and sin no more," "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone"—these stand out clearly and unequivocally, and no exegesis has ventured to assail them. There is no suggestion of interpolation: no thought of tricking with Greek accents. Yet to-day the Christian Church faces this immense class in a totally different spirit.

Here, in London, we have been told that they are more in number than the seats in all our churches, and yet we regard the banishment of them from the promenades of music halls as one step in Christian duty. It may be socially necessary: of that I am incompetent to judge. But that it is a final Christian deliverance I take leave to doubt. I believe much more in opening the churches all night—as this church is open—to receive any who care to come—the one Christian temple in England which, day and night, opens its arms to

homeless wanderers. And I am certain that though those Church societies which exclude the penitent woman from membership may be flourishing societies, though they may protect the ninety-and-nine just persons who need no repentance, yet they fail utterly in understanding the fundamental meaning of the fellowship of repentance. We have come, indeed, to singling out one sin for special reprobation, and singling out one sex for that reprobation while it is a sin of both sexes. The unpardonable sin is not, to us, the sin of the Holy Ghost, but the surrender of a woman's chastity at behest of a man, and it is the unpardonable sin for the woman only. Christ's teaching and practice, we say, are impracticable to-day. Ruskin compared Greek, French, and English infidelity. "We English say 'There is a Supreme Ruler, no question of it, only He cannot rule. His orders won't work. He will be quite satisfied with euphonious and respectful repetition of them. Execution would be too dangerous under existing circumstances, which He certainly never contemplated.'"

I would have you remember that the present domination of male ethics in our parochial life is responsible for women's hardness of judgment of her fallen sisters. Church machinery, in so far as it is operative in this difficult question, operates censoriously. The pharisaism of suburban conceptions of purity judges by a conventional, exterior criterion: it has come to regard certain arbitrary conceptions of clothing as portion of the Catholic deposit. The Vicar who refused to admit a trousered woman to Communion—she was working on a neighbouring farm—was not guilty of any misunderstanding other than the commonplace misunderstanding which has affected all our judgments. His women parish-workers regard cigarette smoking by women with just the same indignation. Smoking may be an undesirable social development: the abbreviation of skirts may be an undesirable innovation. But all this is merely convention, merely the decalogue of mode, the tyranny of, for the most part, male conceptions of fashion, which are a portion of the

economic business theory of trade and are even less reasonable than the terrible drawings of fashionable garments in the illustrated papers. And to separate between the sexes in respect of any standard of social conduct must be a violation of Christian ethic. You will notice that whenever there is a change in female fashions certain pulpit critics raise the cry of immodesty. Skirts which become suddenly narrow are immodest: they are even more immodest when they become wide again. It is one of the curiosities of masculine criticism that unfamiliarity breeds contempt.

It was not the Church, but the drama, which raised the protest against the dual moral standard. When "The Second Mrs. Tanquerary" was produced, a writer of singular acumen wrote of it with high praise in a Church paper. Then came a series of plays with the same moral, ending with "Hindle Wakes," in which the man-of-the-world's defence of his misconduct was put into the mouth of a mill-girl. Meantime, while the drama raised its urgent protest

against the dual standard, the Church was silent. Then came the novel to urge the same lesson: even still the Church remained silent, only to lash herself into fury when two bishops decided that women might speak to women only, in much the same subordinate way as I am speaking to men and women to-night. Even when the State altered the marriage law and declared that a man might marry his deceased wife's sister (but that a woman must not marry her deceased husband's brother) the Church bore it with curious complacence, and never insisted upon her own prohibition equally of both. That page in the Prayer-book which contains the prohibitions is a mockery and a shame. To-day the dual standard is still raised: it is a commonplace that sins are condoned in men which, in women, are unpardonable. So it comes about that the penitent woman is no more comforted by our hymning of virginity than is the sweated sempstress at the thought of her employer singing "Enrich the poor with blessings from Thy

boundless store." Much more to the point, and much more in keeping with Christian ideals, is Miss Skrine's movement at the Weaving Studios. It gives artistic industrial work to these girls, by which they rid themselves of the idea of being outcast: they are not condemned to hideous drudgery as the price of their redemption. "These girls," in a startling phrase, "are extraordinarily like other girls." Giving them an artistic craft is only one aspect of Miss Skrine's work: regarding them as potential saints is the central idea. It is perhaps not unfair to quote John Stuart Mill at this point. "With the usual barefacedness of power not accustomed to find itself disputed, the influence of priests over women is attacked by Protestant and Liberal writers, less for being bad in itself, than because it is a rival authority to the husband, and raises up a revolt against his infallibility." Even within recent years this crude argument has been used against the Church's system of Confession and Absolution. The woman has not an individual soul: part of her

very spiritual life is under her husband's control. And an indignation of a like kind showed itself quite recently in an attack on certain types of ritualistic services. "They are sensuous and even attract courtesans." I am not myself inclined to plead for elaborate methods of worship, but if they attracted that class I should see something good in them. For let us never forget that the exquisite sensitiveness of women to uplifting may not be stamped out even by the coarseness of men: the capacity for love can be wasted and can be misdirected, but for all that it is and it remains capacity for love. It comes at the precious moment with its alabaster box of spikenard when respectability wonderingly and scornfully stands aside. As Dean Church said: "People get into the way of identifying sin with one kind of sin—the sin of the outcasts—and forget the sins of character, of the Pharisees, and of the wicked, wise conspirators against human good and happiness."

Am I pleading for women-priests? I am

not. Nor for women-churchwardens, nor for women-chancellors-of-dioceses, nor—as a matter of fact—for women voters for Parliament. But, I am pleading for a fresh attitude, not only to women, but to the relationship between man and woman. I am asking Churchmen and Churchwomen to clear their minds as to the confusion between respectability and religion, as to the intermixture of social sanctions and religious sanctions. Not every one whom we do not care to ask to dinner is lost eternally. I ask Churchpeople first to find out what constitutes marriage, what is the difference between a sex relationship unblessed by the Church and one which is blessed—and I commend to you Mr. Lacey's great book on "Marriage." Then we can face the purity question, keeping quite separate the rights of the State, the rights of Society, and the rights of the Church. When we have got as far as that we shall begin to realise the possibility of a true conception of womanhood as a portion of the vocation and ministry of the Church, not a mere consenting

womanhood to man's dictatorship, tinged by the puerile "love" of the Victorian novelists, who regarded the hero's love as a kind of condescension to an inferior sex, and regarded the heroine's love as a kind of hero-worship. Victorian novelists changed the proverb that no man could be a hero to his valet, to the preposterous theory that every man is a hero to his wife. We are coming, more rapidly than we suppose, to a conception of marriage which will be free, not in the sense of dissolubility, but in the sense that it will be unforced, either by social claims, or economic pressure, or intellectual inferiority. When that more frank conception is reached, there will be little difficulty in making the Marriage Service in our Prayer-book even more wholesome and direct than it is, and we shall have less fear of the agitation for the ready dissolution of marriage. For if we fight for the indissolubility of marriage, we must fight, first of all, for the presentation before God of a union which is untrammelled by the things of earth and will merit His continual blessing.

It will be a humble marriage service, though. It will not be a triumph-song over the misfortunes of other women. It will ask for God's blessing, not because of its greater merit, but because of its greater sense of responsibility. It will have its frankness and wholesome cleanliness of outlook, but it will not presume to say that the mere prayer for God's witness is the guarantee of that wholesomeness. It will become such a sacred relationship that there will be no one to protest and call it slavery, and no one to demand that those whom God has joined together can be separated by a revising barrister. That which is its poor and worthless imitation and mockery will be slavery, and the Christian conscience will no more tolerate that kind of slavery than Zachary Macaulay could tolerate the purchase of men and women for slavery in his day. You know the inscription on his bust in Westminster Abbey: "During forty successive years, partaking in the counsels and the labours which, guided by favouring Providence, rescued Africa

from the woes, and the British Empire from the guilt, of slavery and the slave-trade, he meekly endured the toil, the privation, and the reproach, resigning to others the praise and the reward." Some day, I think, a Churchman looking back on the years will wonder how so complacently we can tolerate the penalizing of womanhood within the Church, when outside the Church our sisters are paying so terrible a price.

There are among us some who shrug their shoulders, and say that if women wish to work in the Church there is the veil for them. It is true. Either the practical or the contemplative life of separation is, thank God, more available than ever, and what cloistered women have wrought by prayer and by deed cannot be estimated. But I should imagine that a Church in which married clergy are in the vast majority might hesitate at restricting definite work and authority to celibate women; it has a look of an unfair balance. It forgets, too, that the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks began with

the wives of Ethelbert and Clovis. I should hope, therefore, that in the widening of the scope of the Church's methods, some authoritative place might be found for the ministrations of women, for the acceptance of their counsel, for the presenting at the altar of a united catholicity of devotion, in which the strenuousness of the masculine might be associated with the exquisite sensitiveness of the feminine. It is significant that the most prosperous anti-orthodoxy of the moment owes its origin to a woman. Those gorgeous buildings which may be seen alike in Boston and in the West End of London, those successful reading-rooms which one can see everywhere, that most able newspaper, "The Christian Science Monitor," which covers the world with its unostentatious circulation, might all be organs for the Catholic Church if only we had learned the lesson of Wesley. But that is the last lesson our Church will learn. We try to bottle up the enthusiasm of women, to bid them be content with the distribution of parish magazines or with playing

harmoniums in mission halls; at the same time our Catholic practice fails to avail itself of the spirit of prophecy of which women might have utterance. And then we are surprised when we awaken and find a new sect spreading, and attracting all sorts of minds, and leaving the dear old Church to the study of the correct shape of chasuble or the best way of obtaining the maximum advantage with the minimum disadvantage of establishment.

An Italian friend who was taken to one of our ecclesiastical shops was amazed at the effeminacy of the Christ on our English crucifixes. It was a curious criticism when one remembered how Bishop Westcott protested against the Crucifixion by Velasquez, with "its overwhelming pathos and darkness of desolation." If my Italian friend knew more of the later developments of English Churchmanship, he would see even more signs of effeminacy. From Fra Angelico onwards the effeminate representations of our Lord have been brought about, not by the intention of honouring

women, but of regarding womanhood as the type of lowliness and meekness, and this has been emphasized in England. Philosophy, perhaps, can explain why a priest who likes lace on his ecclesiastical robes is the fiercest antagonist of women's claims: why he gets into a panic and imagines a female Archbishop of Canterbury if women ask for episcopal direction as to speaking to other women on subjects which women alone understand. He is not alarmed at the fact that Sir Herbert Tree and Sir J. Forbes-Robertson preached in the pulpit of S. John's Cathedral, New York, on Easter Day—a union of the Memorial of the Resurrection with a Shakespeare celebration. To some of us that is incongruous, not because of the speakers, but because of the juxtaposition of subjects. Our sweet, "lily and violet scented Church"—as Shorthouse described it—is all the more effeminate because men are striving to express both aspects of Christ's message, and so they get out of balance, and they present the feminine without the strength of

the feminine, the "pale anæmic Christ" without His strong feminine patience, the compassionate Christ without His sweeping condemnations, the Christ of Peace, forgetful of the Christ who brought not peace, but a sword. Only, indeed, when we can restore Christ in that fulness of His Manhood which holds in mystic balance both that which is male and that which is female shall we be able to say that in Him "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female."

And if ever there was a moment in history when the contribution of what we may call the feminine qualities was essential, assuredly it is the time when civilization is sensitive lest there should be a domination of mere might. The Superman objected to Christianity on the ground that "it is depressing and slavish, a grovelling idea of loving all men, with a lamentably weak quality called compassion." Not all of Nietzsche's protest against the conventional Christianity of his time was without reason, and it may be that in the conventional Christianity

around him there was little appreciation of the adventurous, bold spirit which flings itself on the sea of faith. In this romantic venture, in this fearless following of Christ, in this more eager and more sensitive response to the whispers of God, which of us is there will deny that women have far the advantage? From that little group at the foot of the Cross we have a rich lesson to learn, as from the fact that it was to women that our Lord entrusted the announcement of His Resurrection. They had come to anoint His body with, tradition says, some of the ointment from the precious box of alabaster. They bore this message, this most important message of all time, not to the world only, but to His most intimate followers. They were Apostles and Evangelists to the Apostles and Evangelists themselves; to them and not to St. John or to St. Peter was given the first evidence of His Appearing. I could understand this remarkable fact having little weight with those to whom the Resurrection is a matter of doubt, but it is

amazing that men to whom the Resurrection is the very fibre of their faith, the centre of their hope, the very heart of their Sacramental life, should lay aside as of no significance this solemn trust which was given to women; it is assuredly the most amazing instance of religious prejudice.

Throughout history they have faced the scorn of the crowd and the dominion of might, in the cause which they supposed to be right, with an exquisiteness of patient endurance which the Nietzschean Superman might envy. Easy it is to say that here and there were blunders and follies: I wish that this could not be said of the Catholic Church. In the grand chorus of human worship it would be only a shadow of a complete oblation which did not include Mary the Mother, Mary Magdalene, Phœbe and Lydia, St. Teresa, St. Catherine, Joan of Arc and Florence Nightingale. Bid them be dumb if you will—(our precious Cantic at Evensong is the Virgin's own); bid Joan of Arc be secluded; bid St. Catherine to

refrain from forcing her will on the Pope ; and then the present estimate of the position of women in the Church will be logical. But the whole of our lives whisper to us of the injustice of standing before God's altar as male and female, so separated, so strangely distinguished. In Christina Rossetti's beautiful prayer we think of them :—"O Lord Jesus, when Thou rewardest the saints, remember, we beseech Thee, for good, those who have surrounded us with holy influences, borne with us, forgiven us, sacrificed themselves for us, loved us ; nor forget any, nor forget us ; but in that day shew us mercy. Amen."

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The Opportunity of the Laywoman

BY

E. A. GILCHRIST

E pur si muove.

1917.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

The Opportunity of the Laywoman.

ONCE upon a time, the great god Pan was credited with the power of causing wild and unaccountable fear to fall upon groups of people on certain occasions, so that the victims were seized with *panic* and said and did strange things. At the risk of being unorthodox, is it possible to suggest, in spite of all that has been said to

The National Mission and the Woman's Movement.

the contrary, that Pan is not dead? He seemed to be very much alive in the summer of 1916, when the National Mission Council was sitting to receive reports from the Committee appointed to consider its relations with other movements. The Mission Council dared to justify its title of *National* by recognising the existence of the most far-reaching movements of our day, including naturally the Woman's Movement. It was shocking of Pan, if Pan was the agent, but he never has respected persons in the least. The more solemn and important and afraid of change people were in the long distant past, the more sport he seemed to have with them; and now, those of us who had toiled so strenuously for our Cause and had taken our opponents with such respectful gravity, suddenly found that Pan—or whoever it is—had begun to occupy himself in the business, and all the world saw the result by means of our remarkable press.

The panic would seem to have passed and even those who positively declared a subject (not yet pronounced upon by the Church as a whole) to be "closed" have broken their own law by writing articles, and letters, and have gone even to pamphlet length upon it. The recovery of equilibrium has also made it clear to some adverse critics that the call to render more extended and

efficient lay-service to our Church is not synonymous with vocation to the ministry of the Sacraments. The opportunity of women, as part of the faithful laity, is one of the most conspicuous and hopeful signs of the furthering of Christ's Kingdom in this year of grace.

Wordsworth exclaimed, about a hundred years ago, when he thought of the social ideals on the horizon in the day which heralded liberty, equality and fraternity:—

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven.

Has the National Mission brought the throb of any such kindling hope as these words express to the hearts of Churchpeople? A time of crisis such

Crisis and Opportunity. as the present is a time of opportunity. All things are possible. The eve of a great reconstruction of national and international life is an occasion for seeing visions and dreaming dreams and showing for what we stand. It would be a serious thing if we were to miss our Epiphany.

If we are alive, as we ought to be, in this dawn, we cannot help seeing that it is upon us who are the laity that this duty of manifestation lies. The ideals of to-day are democratic, and the Church, acting as her Lord's representative, may well do as He did and take *what is there* to disclose God. The material which furnished the means of expression in a past era cannot serve the same purpose in the present. When a flower is plucked it does not grow again, although another springs from the parent-root in its stead. It was the realisation of this fact which led to the forming of a scheme for the representation of the laity in the Councils of the Church, and the further idea of calling into existence an ecclesiastical council, which would express by a representative system the corporate mind of the Church in this country, with the united voice of bishops, clergy, and laity.

History makes it clear that the consultation of the laity in the Christian Church is no new thing, also that the part played so frequently by the

Church and Nation.

the part played so frequently by the crowned heads of the people has now devolved on their elected representatives, as the absolute monarchy developed into a sovereignty which is constitutional. It is important to notice that, with this transition, the relations between Church and State in England were entirely altered. The Royal Supremacy* is conditioned by Parliament; and Parliament can no longer be considered as a lay-assembly of the Church, for the simple reason that its members are not necessarily English Churchmen as they were in the past. The coming of William of Orange in 1688 marked the great change, and forms of religion, other than those of the Established Church, were henceforward tolerated and protected in this country, while Parliament was thrown open to persons of any—or of no—religious persuasion. The Dutch Prince and his advisers wanted to go a step further and pass an Act of Union or Comprehension, by which the whole status of the Church was to be altered for the satisfaction of various dissenting bodies. This was strenuously resisted by the Lower House of Convocation, backed by the faithful laity who, in the House of Commons, insisted upon Convocation being consulted. The Lords passed the Bill, and while the Lower House of Convocation was "stiff for the Church of England," the Bishops, owing, perhaps, to political appointments, were not. The consequence was a temporary suppression of Convocation, but the Union Bill was withdrawn. The fact that many prominent Churchmen were adherents of the Stuart cause did not lead, as in Scotland, †

* A point worth noticing is that the anointed Sovereign may be of either sex.

† William sent for Alexander Rose, Bishop of Edinburgh, and asked if he would serve him. The good bishop could only make a qualified reply, "as far as reason, law and conscience will allow me." He was eventually ejected from his Cathedral of St. Giles, but he and the other prescribed bishops and their successors continued the line of the Scottish Episcopate by secret ordinations, until the repeal of the penal laws, 1792.

to the Establishment of Presbyterianism, but it resulted in the general depression of the Church of England. In the reign of the "wee German Lairdie" the occurrence of a quarrel between the Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation furnished the Government with an excuse for suppressing a body suspected of Jacobite sympathies; and it did not meet again for the space of 135 years.

It was necessary, when seeking to secure the power of corporate action in the Church to-day, that the place of the laity should be restored, and it was for this end that the scheme for Lay Representation in the Councils of the Church, referred to above, was drawn up. A consultative body, known by the somewhat misleading title of the Representative Church Council, had been formed in 1904, and it, at present, consists of the Canterbury and York Convocations and the two Houses of Laymen from these provinces. The suggested basis of the scheme, passed in this assembly,* was the formation of parochial Church Councils, and here the position of the laywoman at once presented itself.

In spite of the fact that in the historic vestry meetings of England men and women had always served on perfectly equal terms, a section of Churchmen tried to innovate in a retrograde direction by opposing the eligibility of Churchwomen to act on the proposed Parochial Church Councils. The debate on the question was instructive, in the sense that it displayed an almost incredible disregard of history, modern thought, and the standpoint of women at the present time, on the part of those who nominally represent the laity of the Church of England. One gentleman, to whom the vestry-law seemed unknown, asked if it was safe to put the Church of England on a wholly new basis, adding, as an unanswerable argument, that while he knew the soul of a servant-girl was of more value than his, the question was whether the judgment of a servant-girl

* July 9 and 10, 1914.

was of more value than his. He did not explain how he arrived at his theory of the inequality of human souls, nor why servant-girls, valuable as they are, should be chosen out of all their sex as typical of those likely to sit on the councils of the Church. Another gentleman asserted, with seriousness, that to allow women to take part in electing members to Church Councils, on the same terms as men, would be to forbid the expression of the "real Lay Mind of Churchpeople," because more women were confirmed annually than men. The only deductions which can be made from this remarkable statement is that the "real laity" of the Church are distinguished by their rejection of the Apostolic rite of Confirmation, or that the woman's mind is clerical, not lay, or perhaps there was a notion that all women were entirely dominated by clergy. As a cumulative effort yet another layman (who also forgot the old vestry-law) said there was a strong feeling that the question had been unnaturally forced upon them, and alleged that a conference on the subject of the ordination of women was in contemplation by women "of a certain sort." This discovery, strangely enough, did not seem to raise any particular interest in the assembly of bishops, clergy and laity, so it was kept safe for production as a heinous "conspiracy" two years later.

If I were to go on quoting similar statements which sound "passing strange" to us everyday people, there would be no room for anything else in this pamphlet, and it is only fair to say that the enlightened view was put concisely and well by a few laymen, and strongly urged by several of the bishops. With the exception of two unfavourable Deans the clergy contributed practically nothing to the discussion. It is probable that the idea, in the minds of many of the conscientious objectors, was to the following effect. They felt, perhaps, that the clergy, by reason of their position, manner of life and training, were not really conversant with life as it must be faced in the world by the ordinary man, and they made the same general application to women, who theoretically do not leave the sheltered home, and being

content to ask their husbands, or perhaps parish priests, all they want to know, have no real contribution to make to the mind of the Church. Such a theory applied to the modern woman is, of course, wholly untenable—I had almost said ridiculous. This discussion took place only a month before the beginning of the War, and many conservative views of women's capabilities have altered since then.

The following year, at the time the completed scheme for the representation of the laity was adopted by the Representative Church Council (July, 1915), a memorial was presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury, as President of the Council, praying that the rules for the representation of the laity should be amended to render women communicants eligible for election on all assemblies open to male communicants. This petition had been organised by the C.L.W.S. and bore 4,560 signatures.* The eligibility of women to elect, and serve upon, Parochial Church Councils was eventually recognised by a majority in each of the Houses of the Representative Church Council, in spite of continued opposition on the part of some laymen. We may be pardoned for regretting that so much time should have been spent over a question which ought never to have been raised, seeing that the existing foundation of the Vestry Meeting was already there as material on which to build.

These proceedings have been treated at some length because they are not generally known, and also because it is on this scheme adopted by the Representative Church Council that the Archbishops' Committee on the Relations between Church and State have based their recommendations for lay representation in the Report issued in the summer of 1916. The idea is that

* A similar petition, also organised by the League, had been presented to the House of Convocation (Canterbury) in February, 1912.

every parish—or group of parishes—should have its parochial council, for which all adults, who have the status of communicants, are eligible. The possible functions of these Parochial Church Councils are discussed in the Report. The constitution and powers which may be conferred upon them are questions I do not purpose to touch upon, but rather to consider an aspect of their use which presents a great opportunity.

Parochial Church Councils are, potentially, effective instruments for *witness*. They are to be heirs to the vestries and, in former times, vestries were largely concerned with the duties of citizenship. The sequence of events which led to the fundamental change in the relations of Church and State, already touched upon in this pamphlet, has caused the temporal powers and duties of the vestry to pass into other bodies (such as Boards of Guardians and District Councils), but that does not mean that Churchpeople, as such, are freed from considering the social welfare of their neighbours. If, in every parish, there was an instructed and vital group of men and women, acting together as professed members of our Lord's Body, ready to right the wrong in their immediate vicinity, ready to take action on behalf of their fellow-members and with their support to see justice done and the voice of Christ heard in every local contingency, ready to join with all the corresponding Parochial Councils in one great act of witness when called upon by the Church, should we not deserve, more than we do, the title of the Church Militant?

This is not to suggest for a moment that the proposed Parochial Councils should act *instead* of the corporate congregations, but for practical purposes every one knows that duties must devolve on smaller bodies chosen by and representing the whole. Perhaps it is not far amiss to compare what I am trying to express with the relationship of the parish priest to his people. As the priest is the representative of the congregation in the discharge of his office and also represents God to them,

so the corporate body of clergy and laity which make up a Church (in the local or parochial sense) represents God to the community outside their assembly and carries the needs of that community to God. The Parochial Council would be, therefore, simply an agent to help to put that ideal into practice.

Since the War began, it has been the universal custom to hold intercession services for those who are fighting

War for their country, and in many churches the clergy have directed the
Intercessions. devotions with regard to particular events, calling for renewed prayer for guidance and help, or thanksgiving for success and preservation. If the laity were to show themselves ready to respond in the warfare to spread Christ's Kingdom in the world, we may hope that these devotions may be continued and adapted to this end. Should the battle, for example, be to ensure better housing in a district, there seems no reason why the names of those who are fighting actively in it should not be commended to the prayers of the people who do their part by intercession. The men and women in each parish who are engaging in the great fight with prostitution, with sweating, with drink, might have the specific prayers of their fellow-worshippers as well as the general petitions of the Church, and, when a great measure comes before the nation, the Church's intercessions ought to save us from the disgrace of delaying to raise the age of consent, for instance, or the injustice of with-holding from qualified women the right of being included among the "citizens of this realm and empire."

But there is a still greater possibility of witness before our Church in England, and a wider vision of what she may yet be called upon to do.

The Catholic Church has the power of combining in a remarkable degree apparently conflicting forms of government and administration. Like the parables, in which our Lord enshrined so much of His teaching, she presents, as all living things do, a certain divine paradox. She is,

as the Bishop of Oxford reminds us, at the same time a monarchy and a democracy.

It is possible that, in the not-far-distant future, all religious bodies will be on an equality, as far as their relations with the State are concerned. Should this occur it will not destroy, but intensify, their character. The failure of the attempt to hastily fuse the Church in this country with bodies outside her communion, at the time of the Revolution of 1688, has been already mentioned, and only a short time before that vindication of her entity she had risen against the policy of James II. At the Reformation she weathered the storm and parted with none of the essentials of her being, and by the action of Queen Elizabeth (who was bitterly described by a Papal Nuncio as "yonder pernicious woman") she was restored to certain independence of action in her own affairs.* At the lowest ebb in our Church's history—the reign of the four Georges—when Convocation did not meet (and her noble Abbey of Westminster was crowded with pagan, but tasteless, monuments), she seemed, indeed, somnolent, but awoke with renewed vigour in the middle of last century. Her communion has spread over the world. From the sister-church in Scotland rose the Church in America; the opportunity in her daughter-churches is simply awaiting realisation.

The Anglican Church will have an important contribution to make to the re-union of Christendom, and,

Vocation. with this great vocation, she can ill afford to dispense with the services of any of her members, but rather has need to develop these to their utmost capacity. The men and women, who realise this, will not be content until the conventional restrictions of sex, based largely on assumptions, are at least re-considered in the light of fundamental Christian principles. Customs are not

* It is recorded that before Elizabeth ratified the Thirty-Nine Articles, which she did not do readily, she prefixed to Article XX. the words, *The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith.*

necessarily right because they are old ; they serve their purpose, but to consider them immutable is, as an eminent divine said recently, to invite *Mr. Legality* to preside over our councils. It may require a greater act of faith to change them than to adhere to them.

A Christian may lose everything but—like Albert of Belgium—he must not lose his soul. His personality is not obliterated, but enriched, as development proceeds. He is influenced, restricted, and acts by co-operation with other personalities but if, after adolescence is past, he allows himself to be actually dominated by another—which is not the same thing as rendering obedience to lawful authority—he loses, or at least fails to attain, to the fulness of his being. It is this conviction which makes for liberty. Race, class, or sex domination becomes intolerable once it is realised, and rebellion in these cases is not due to pride or self-seeking, but is obedience to a higher call. No virtue has been so much traduced as that of meekness, which does not consist in the absence of power to enforce, or to withhold, submission, but is possible only when that power is possessed and known. Our Lord's restraint in the use of conscious power has been called the "masterpiece of Christ." What is the meaning, then, of trying to force back the mental and spiritual contribution of womanhood into the narrow channels of that private influence, which is so much more liable to abuse than the free interchange of opinion, or the unfettered delivery of a message, in the open ?

One result of the unnatural division of the sphere of the laity has been a modern and quite unjustifiable tendency to lessen the highest responsibility which a layman can possess, and either put his share on the woman's shoulders or elsewhere. It is declared from the pulpit, with every appearance of conviction, that it is the mother's duty to instruct girls clearly in the mysteries of life, and the priest's corresponding task to instruct boys on the same subject. There are guilds for mothers instead of for parents ; mothers are blamed if children are not brought to the sacraments, and the

equal responsibility of the fathers, to all appearance, does not exist. It is, surely, wrong to go on acquiescing in those errors ; it must be possible to get the present false balance properly adjusted, or how can we go forward to our further opportunities ? How disappointing, then, it is, whenever the attempt at readjustment is made, to hear the indiscriminating cry of "*The Church in danger*" !

The old volunteer movement in this country, which has been replaced by the territorial force, chose for its watchword "*Defence not Defiance.*"

**The Kingdom
of God
First.**

That was a very proper motto for the volunteers, but I cannot imagine any company of catholically-minded Churchpeople permanently adopting such an attitude. The Church is not intended primarily for defence, but we are bound to defy the world, the flesh, and the devil (especially in our own ranks), and to put the articles of our belief into practice all the days of our life. As long as we are pushing on in the Name and Spirit of Christ, not forgetting to equip us with His armour, defence of ourselves is none of our business, but that of the angels, and to falter in the moment of a great advance, for fear of being a laughing-stock, is unworthy of our calling. An unfortunate result of our higher educational system has been class-consciousness and the dread of ridicule, which are such hindrances to the enjoyment of the glorious Christian liberty which is ours for the daring. It is not worth while to rule our lives by negations—the things we are afraid to do—as it takes all the time and energy we can possibly summon to work out positively the great fundamental Christian principles, in preparation for the best that is still to be.

Is it not time, then, that we rose to the opportunity now before us, and in the equality of the laity, as in other matters, put the idea of "the glory of the man" away from us, giving place to the incomparably higher intention of the greater glory of God ?

*Some Books and Pamphlets recommended for
the study of this subject:—*

Church Reform, edited by DOUGLAS EYRE. (John Murray, 1916.) 2s. 6d.

The Archbishops' Committee's Report on Church and State. (S.P.C.K., 1916.) 2s. 6d.

The Archbishops' Committee's Report on Church and State. Abridged edition, 6d., Summary, 1d.

The Religion of the Church: a Manual of Church Membership, by the BISHOP OF OXFORD. (Mowbray, 1916.) 1s.

Some Aspects of the Women's Movement, edited by ZOE FAIRFIELD. (Student Christian Movement, 1916.)

Urgent Church Reform, by FR. PAUL B. BULL, C.R. (Mirfield Manuals.) 1d.

The Church in Relation to the Women's Movement, by LIEUT.-COMM. J. L. CATHER, R.N. (C.L.W.S., 1914.) 1d.

Women and the Church of England, by A. MAUDE ROYDEN. (Allen & Unwin, 1916.) 3d.

The Church and Women, by JOHN LEE. (Longman's, 1916.) 6d.

Ready in February, 1917.

The Laywoman in the Church of England: Report of a Public Conference in the CHURCH HOUSE, February 3rd, 1917. (C.L.W.S.)

Women in Church and Nation, by REV. F. LEWIS DONALDSON. (C.L.W.S.) 3d.

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The Laywoman in the Church of England.

REPORT OF THE
PUBLIC CONFERENCE
at the
CHURCH HOUSE, WESTMINSTER,

Saturday, February 3rd, 1917.

THE CHURCH LEAGUE FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE,
6 YORK BUILDINGS, ADELPHI, LONDON, W.C.

Price 7d.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Public Conference on February 3rd, 1917, was organized by the Church League for Women's Suffrage for two purposes. It gave, on the one hand, an occasion to Churchpeople to welcome and support the statement and recommendations of the Central Council of the National Mission regarding the Woman's Movement, and, on the other, it provided an opportunity for those who differed, in any way, to state their views in free and open discussion, or to make other proposals.

No trouble was spared in making this opportunity widely known. All clergy of the Church of England in London were notified, and asked to make the meeting known to their congregations, as well as the numerous Church Societies. Notices were also sent to the bishops in England and Wales and to the members of the Houses of Laymen in the provinces of Canterbury and York, and the Conference was fully advertised in the Church Press.

The following ladies and gentlemen supported the Bishop of Willesden on the platform : The Rev. Maurice Bell, Miss M. A. Bell, Tho Hon, Mrs. Tatton Bower, Miss Bridgman, Mrs. Catlin, Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson, Mr. and Mrs. F. Shewell Cooper, Mrs. Creighton, Sir Johnstone Forbes-Robertson, Lady Jane Gathorne-Hardy, Miss Gollock, The Rev. F. M. Green, Mr. John Greenhalgh, Mrs. St. Clair Stobart-Greenhalgh, Mr. and Mrs. Holford Knight, the Rev. C. G. and Mrs. Langdon, Mrs. Hudson Lyall, Lady Meiklejohn and Miss Meiklejohn, Mrs. Perrin, the Rev. W. C. and Mrs. Roberts, the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard, the Rev. W. Hudson Shaw, Mrs. Close Shipham, the Rev. N. E. Egerton Swann, Miss M. E. J. Taylor, Miss Townend, Miss Villiers, the Rev. C. Warlow, Miss Warton, the Rev. Dr. Weitbrecht.

For the text of statement and resolutions regarding the Woman's Movement, see Appendix I.

Letters of apologies for absence will be found in Appendix II. of this Report.

The Laywoman in the Church of England.

Report of the Public Conference in the Church House, 3rd February, 1917.

The Right Rev. THE LORD BISHOP OF WILLESDEN took the Chair at 3 P.M.

MR. F. SHEWELL COOPER (Hon. Secretary of the C.L.W.S.) read a number of letters written in approval of the objects of the Meeting, and intimated apologies for absence.

THE CHAIRMAN : We have listened with keen interest to the letters which have been read from those in authority who favour our Movement and who have expressed their opinions quite clearly. There are people, of course, who do not see with us but our Organizing Secretary reports that as a matter of fact she has received only very few letters, in answer to those sent out by her, opposing in any way the ideal of this Conference. Speaking for myself I must confess that I have received a certain number of anonymous letters—I have been the recipient of such letters almost all my life—and I need hardly say that they have no influence upon me whatever, but I have also had letters from several of my friends who think that this time is not opportune for a Conference upon the subject. With all respect I differ from them, and I agree entirely with those who have expressed their opinions in the letters read. (Applause.) At the beginning of the National Mission, when preparations were being made, it is in the recollection of all that opposition to women giving addresses in Church was started and was fostered by comparatively few people, but to avoid anything in the nature of controversy or discord in connection with the preparation for the Mission it was decided that the question should not then be discussed. But now that the first chapter of the National Mission is closed it does seem to me, and I am glad that it seems so to many others on this

platform and in this hall, that it is only right that we should confer and try to discover what really are the best ways and means of developing women's work in the Church as well as in the State.

This is to be a Conference, and we have three speakers to whom, I am sure, we shall give such time as they need ; but after that we shall be willing to welcome any who wish to ask questions or to speak for five minutes. It does not take a wise person a long time to ask a question, only it does take sometimes a long time to answer ; but still those questions will be, so far as possible, answered. Those who wish to address briefly the audience must speak from the platform, except in the case of those in the gallery.

The time, indeed, has come when there must be something much more clear and definite in connection with women's work than exists at present. If I may introduce a personal note for the moment I can speak from an experience of more than forty years in the ministry, during the whole of which I have taken my little share in endeavouring to put forward the position of women and to secure for them a proper basis and foundation so far as their interests are concerned in the State. It was my privilege many years ago to stand upon the platform with Josephine Butler (applause) and Jane Taylor, and during my twenty years' experience out in the Far West of Canada, although I have had my share of ridicule and although people have thought that it was very bad taste ever to speak upon such a subject, I did all in my power to prepare the way, and to-day a referendum has been put to all who have the right to vote in British Columbia, and by a large majority that most conservative Province has recommended woman suffrage. But in British Columbia we had not the difficulties which I think this movement had some little time ago, in the conduct of some supporters, who used methods which to us, at all events, were eminently unsatisfactory.

In my temperance work in the same way I have been called naturally a crank and fanatic almost throughout the whole of my ministry ; indeed, I am called by a

leading Church paper this very week, for reasons which, not being editor of a Church paper, I do not understand, "a heretic" because I am a prohibitionist. No doubt I have used intemperate language. I do not apologise for it. In the United States of America Mrs. Carrie Nation, whose name, perhaps, is forgotten now, armed herself and her followers with hammers, and declared that she would break the windows of every public house in Chicago. I did not appreciate those tactics of Mrs. Carrie Nation, but I yield to no one in my intense earnestness in fighting against the drink and I pray that the prohibition of the drink, at all events during the war, may come before very long.

But the Woman's Movement has progressed so marvellously since then that, although there may be some enthusiasts who think that it is still too slow, we must remember that there was a time when no married woman could hold any property of her own that was not at the disposal of her husband; when there was no such thing as a woman voter upon the municipal lists; when the medical profession was absolutely barred to women; when the Universities refused altogether to admit them to any higher learning. When, therefore, we think of the changes that have come we thank God and take courage; and we believe that this is the time now, when women have shown their splendid sacrifice in connection with this war, in giving up all that is nearest and dearest to them, husband, lover, brother, and son; and when we know all the work that is being done and in their unstinted and whole-hearted response, we ought to be to-day—not only those who are present here, who are more or less, I suppose, of one mind—but we ought to be in this whole country determined that prejudice shall be set on one side and that the question shall be dealt with fairly, and that both in Church and State woman shall have her true position given to her.

So far as the Church is concerned and so far as my authority here as Chairman is upheld by the Meeting, I hope that the burning question which has been referred to by the Bishop of London and by the Bishop of

Southampton, will not be brought before this Conference. I make an appeal that the question of the admission of women to the priesthood of the Church shall not be one of our subjects for discussion at the Conference, and I hope that I shall carry the Conference with me. It is the ecclesiastical question that we are here to discuss. After the war, in the State we ought to have, without a shadow of a doubt, the votes of women registered just as much as of men in the selection of those who are to represent us in Parliament.

And in the Church you have heard that in this diocese of London there is, we hope, to be in connection with the National Mission, an allowance made to women to sit upon Ruri-Decanal Conferences. They have served upon all Councils in connection with the preparation of the Mission; they are going to serve upon the Councils that remain now that the message has been delivered; but we hope that those Councils may be connected with the Ruri-Decanal Conference, and therefore with the Diocesan Conference. The Diocesan Conference is to a large extent at present an academic debating society; the meetings are for the most part very dull, though the introduction of the question of finance has to a certain extent electrified them.

But we want more; we want some day in the Church of England a real Synod in every diocese which shall, when necessary, speak and vote as lay and clerical bodies, and which shall have the authority and power which the present Diocesan Conference has not. In our Diocesan Conference of London, if all the members met we should have certainly a most striking body of men, one of the most striking in the whole of the Empire. But, unfortunately, they do not attend. We have as Honorary Members of our Conference the Lord Chancellor, the Lords Lieutenant of London and Middlesex; we have the heads of the great Public Schools that are in the Diocese of London, including Harrow and Westminster; we have every Member of Parliament who is a Churchman in accordance with our Constitution, and many others, but they never come and they never will

come until the whole tone of the Diocesan Conference is changed from what it is at present. The election of women, and the eventual presence of women in this Conference may perhaps tend towards the change which we hope will come in our Church.

But whether that is so or not, and it is a subject for our Conference to-day, I hope I have not detained you too long. I will now ask that the resolution shall be duly proposed, seconded and supported and then voted upon.

DR. LETITIA FAIRFIELD.

My Lord Bishop, Ladies and Gentlemen, I will read to you the resolution that we propose to place before the Conference :—

“That this meeting welcomes the statement of the aims of the Woman’s Movement adopted by the Central Council of the National Mission in July, 1916, and urges upon the Church the necessity of putting into practice the resolutions following therefrom, which were passed by the Council :—

“(a) By throwing open to Churchwomen all opportunities for service now enjoyed by laymen, and

“(b) By impressing upon clergy and laity the duty of considering the Woman’s Movement ‘in the light of the principles of Christianity.’ ”

In considering this resolution, the Executive of the Church League for Woman’s Suffrage has asked me to speak to you this afternoon in the name of the whole League. In order to explain our position in this matter we want you to consider the statement to which it refers, the resolution passed by the Central Committee of the National Mission of Repentance and Hope last July. I know what we on the Executive felt about this resolution, and I know how a great many old friends of the League who have been at its meetings from the beginning felt about it. It simply meant that we had won—that is all. It meant that the point of view the League stood for and the principles it has been trying to enunciate throughout these last hard years, had con-

quered. The fact that the Central Council of the National Mission, in drawing up its statement on the aims of the Woman’s Movement, used terms that might have been framed by our own Executive is victory in essence. I do not mean, when I say that we have conquered, that all the fighting is necessarily over. We have got to a pitch in this great war when it is clear that we have won, but the difficulty is to make our opponents believe it. It is much the same in regard to the stage that we suffragists have reached in our fight for the State franchise, and it is the position we have reached in regard to our place in the Church.

If I may return for a moment to explain what I mean, I must ask you to consider again the principles on which this League was founded. It began with a realisation of the truth, if I may quote words which we have heard used already this afternoon, that we “are always in the presence of God,” and in the midst of this struggle for the vote we found ourselves too often—even amongst those who agreed with us—in the presence of people who seemed to show, in regard to certain phases of their activities, that they were not always as conscious of the presence of God as at other times. We wanted then to bring them back to the principle, that surely should rule the whole of our life, if our beliefs are of any value at all, that all our activities are equally sacred and are equally subject to the rules of conduct laid upon members of the Church.

We were often told, for example, that the Church and politics could have nothing to do with each other. It seemed to us that nothing could be more dangerous than to suggest that it was a right and proper thing for an elector to leave his conscience outside the polling booth ; for if half that we hear about politics is true he wants his conscience then more than at any other time in his life. And we also felt, as far as the Church was concerned, that it would not do for the Church League for Women’s Suffrage to ask things from politicians that we could not ask from the leaders of our own Church ; that we could not expect the much abused and despised politician to

be more advanced and clear-sighted, to have a finer conception of the equality of sex, than the Bench of Bishops. For these, if for no other reasons, we were obliged to unite these two fundamental principles of our League—Equality in Church and State.

The only thing that we might perhaps have altered is in Clause 2 of the statement, which says :—

“That the substance of this new moral consciousness may be defined as the spiritual awakening of both women and men to women’s need of greater freedom and opportunity :—

“(a) For self-realisation and development ; and

“(b) For extended labour and service in the community, *i.e.*, in both Church and State.”

Well, the second of these we would have put first. What we wish, surely, is to lay more emphasis on our desire for extended labour and service in the community, both in Church and State, rather than upon the demand for self-realisation and self-development, which can only enter into our demands as an opportunity for greater and wider service.

Now, to turn to the more immediate object of this Conference, our position as laywomen in the Church. What is our justification for bringing it before you at the present time ? We are told that the moment is not opportune for bringing such questions forward to your notice. Every one, I think, is pretty well united that this is not the time for active political propaganda except so far as it may be necessary to deal with measures being considered by Parliament. Are we under similar prohibition in regard to our propaganda for equality in the Church ? Surely not at a time when the Church is searching its own heart as to the need for reform, with a view to making things right and better before our great armies come home. Surely this is the time when the Spirit is moving over the face of the waters, and if ever there was an appropriate moment when women may press their claim it is this and no other.

We do not intend to apologise in the least for bringing this before you and telling you that we are going to ask for your support in a campaign that will carry this movement throughout the country. We feel that we are serving our country in asking for greater opportunities for women and in making the demand that the Church should put its own house in order. We feel that we are asking you to do work that can better be done now than at any later time. In the course of our campaign, and it may be in the course of our proceedings this afternoon, we shall hear a good deal of opposition raised to our proposals. I want to show at the outset that we are not pressing this Movement so much from the point of view of what is “woman’s right” and “woman’s claims.” In the Manifesto that has been sent round to you entitled ‘The Larger Hope,’ you will find expressed in words better than I can use the peculiar angle from which we want you to view this question. We are not supporting it from the point of woman’s rights at all ; but we are starting at the other end, thinking of God’s rights over our lives and God’s opportunity for using His servants. That is our point of view, and I would ask those who feel it their peculiar duty to keep woman in her place to search their hearts and consider whether in fact they are not keeping God out of His place. We of the Executive want very much to hear what is the opposition—if it does exist at this Meeting—to the fundamental claims we have put down. These opponents to the principle of women taking an equal place in State and Church may be divided into three groups.

First there are those who realise that we have won, as the Prussians realise that we have won, and they can only mark their sense of defeat by outbursts of “frightfulness.” For examples of that I refer you to the correspondence columns of the Church papers.

Secondly, there is the broad-minded individual who does advance, but who, unfortunate’y, keeps his mind in water-tight compartments. I can best explain this type by describing the attitude of a certain lawyer

whose indignation was great indeed when tram drivers threatened to go on strike if women were introduced, even to the extent of suggesting that they should be taken out and shot in the Tower. Since women conductors have been taken on he has accepted them gracefully; but he went down the other night pallid with fury to oppose the motion of Mr. Holford Knight to allow women to be admitted to the Bar.

Then there is the "strong silent" man who does not argue; he does not think it worth while. The other day I had to deal with a lady who was told that her little child must go to a special kind of school for the good of its health. She refused absolutely; she said she did not like it and as to her husband "it was no use talking to him for he wouldn't hear of it." I asked her Mr. Brown's reasons and she could not tell me. "If you cannot tell me his reasons," I said, "perhaps you will ask him to be kind enough to come here and state his objections, so that we may meet them." "Indeed," she replied, "Mr. Brown is a man. 'E don't always tell his wife his reasons, much less strange young women."

That spirit also, I venture to think, has strong root in the Church, and there are a great many who do not feel under any obligation, so vastly inferior do they consider women, to state their reasons at all. Unfortunately for them, however, just as Mr. and Mrs. Brown found that the law was on the side of the "strange young woman" when the interests of their child were concerned, these gentlemen may discover that modern sentiment is not satisfied by their attitude. It would be an excellent thing if all the individuals who are too proud to state their objections were obliged to formulate them; they would have the shock of their lives in discovering how weak they are.

I have tried, very inadequately, to lay before you why the Executive feels it is their duty to ask the League to participate in work of this kind at this time. We believe that this is urgent work of national importance, and we feel, moreover, that it is the work Christ would have us do.

MISS A. MAUDE ROYDEN.

My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen, when we are asked to consider the right of laywomen of the Church of England to an equal place with that of laymen, most of us, I think, are a little astonished to realise how very small a place, and what narrow powers belong to the laity at all. I think it may soon be wise for the oppressed laywoman to join forces with the oppressed layman and ask for a reconsideration of the whole subject! But even now, we have some small—very small—powers and responsibilities, and it is surely our business to use such machinery as we have. Indeed, I think in that respect, and although women are at an even greater disadvantage than men, the Church has had some right to complain of the attitude of her lay people; we have not used even the machinery that we had, and if the Church is increasingly undemocratic, it is at least partly because those of us who declare ourselves to be her faithful children have largely restricted ourselves to criticising her methods without using the small powers we had for improving them; and, therefore, such a Meeting as this fills one with hope just because it shows that we are trying to realise our own responsibility. Dr. Fairfield made one small criticism of the resolution that was passed by the National Mission Council last July. Perhaps she will be almost inclined to withdraw even that criticism if I tell her that the resolution which puts the realisation of woman's personality before her demand for the opportunity of service, was not drawn up by a woman but by a man; and that a man should put first the right of women to develop their own personality is a very healthy sign! The whole of that Resolution was drawn up with some small amendments by a man, a member of the National Mission Council, with the exception of that inoffensive looking little clause which is placed separately at the end.

When a resolution is passed by a Council and not sent to the press, it is a difficult matter to know exactly how far that resolution can be used in public; and those of us who wanted to use it were not a little relieved when

opponents of the resolution with great enthusiasm proceeded to quote practically the whole of it in every place, platform, or newspaper that they could find. Since they have done this I suppose that I may feel free to say something also. That last clause, then, which refers to one at least of the points for discussion this afternoon, that is the right of women to speak in Church, originally closed with this clause: "*Subject only to those restrictions which are observed in the case of laymen.*" Now in the course of discussion the resolution was amended more than once and (as you know sometimes happens in discussion) that last clause was left out, I think by inadvertence; but at any rate it was left out, very much to my own regret, because had it remained it would have prevented the extraordinary confusion which seems to prevail in the minds of some, as between the priestly and prophetic offices; and it also lays down what is really not a question of expediency but of principle—that laywomen of the Church affirm their equality in all matters with the laymen of the Church. The original resolution asked that women should be allowed to speak in the Church subject only to those restrictions which are observed in the case of laymen. I have noticed that many of our friends and supporters are now pressing this right of women on the grounds that it is expedient, and (they assert) it is not a matter of principle.

Now I hate differing from my friends, but I do want to affirm this afternoon that to me, and I believe I speak for the vast mass of the women interested in this question—it is a matter of principle. (Cheers.) It is for that reason that we believe it will also be a matter of expediency. We are pragmatists enough to believe that what is right in principle will also be right in practice, and this assertion of the equality of the laywoman with the layman is, with many of those to whom it is a matter of deep interest, undoubtedly a question of principle. We affirm it on the ground that women are human beings, that they are half of the human race and that the Church can never express all that Divine Humanity which was in

Christ as long as from its government, its teaching voice, its administration, women are altogether excluded. It is, as Dr. Letitia Fairfield has said, a question rather of serving God with the whole of humanity than it is a question of the rights and privileges of one sex or the other. It is ridiculous to suppose that women, with the opportunities that they have before them to-day, should be led by a frantic ambition to demand the right to sit on a Parish Council or vote at a Ruri-Decanal Council! That privilege in itself is a very little thing. Why should women like Mrs. Streatfield, Mrs. Tennant, Miss Violet Markham, or Miss Margaret Ashton, to mention only a few names at random, madly long to be sidesmen and Churchwardens? If they took up such offices, it could be through a sense of duty only, and I cannot too often repeat that it is not a desire to seize upon small opportunities of exercising little power that is at the back of this demand for freedom in the Church; it is the sense that the Church has suffered, that the Church has been maimed, and has lost in power because she is governed by the experience and genius of only one half of the human race.

On what ground, then, do we ask for admission to those scanty rights which are exercised by laymen? Why do we desire to speak in the Churches "subject only to the restrictions under which they speak?" Why do we desire to take part in the administration and the government of the Church? On what grounds do we make our claim? On Christian grounds, on the ground that the teaching of Christ makes none of those frivolous distinctions between men and women, that He alone of all the great religious teachers made no distinction between His attitude towards men and His attitude towards women; because there is not in the Gospels any teaching offering to women a different ideal or a different sphere from men; because there are no words, whether good, bad or indifferent, which set women apart from men; because every word that our Lord said He addressed to human beings as human beings; because you cannot distinguish when He speaks, except by the

context, whether He is speaking to men or to women. On this ground we base our claim.

And now I want to ask on what ground do you refuse it? Is there in any of the Gospels, in any word that our Lord spoke, anything from which you could derive the ruling that a woman may speak in schoolroom, hall or church house, but not in church or cathedral? Is there a word anywhere—because we only desire to learn—from which one might derive the idea that a woman may vote for a Parish Council but not for a Ruri-Decanal Council? I am not asking this in a frivolous spirit—is there anything in the spirit of Christ's teaching that justifies these meticulous distinctions? Is there anything that He lays down as a principle that you can in any way interpret so? Do you think if Christ had seen (for example) a congregation slowly gathering itself together after matins in Church with prayer-books, hymn-books, and umbrellas, and walking across to the schoolroom to listen to a sermon preached by a woman—do you think He would have recognised in this removal from one building to another, any great principle at stake? Or when a woman is allowed to speak in church, as one bishop laid it down the other day, if she "gives instruction," but not if she "preaches a sermon"? The distinction throws a curious light upon the character of the average sermon.

Is there any fundamental teaching, or fundamental principle, of Christ at issue? If there are some here to-day, and I hope there are, who do feel that there is a fundamental principle at issue, will they make it clear to us what it is? I am speaking, I am certain, for those who speak and think with me when I say that we honestly desire to understand what the opposition is based upon; we desire to reason together and to know what it is in the teaching of Christ to which you are appealing when you deny to us equality with the laymen of the Church.

And that brings me to the second part of the resolution. We want the Church not only to consider the position of women in the Church, but the Woman's Movement itself,

because there is here a source of enthusiasm and strength and vitality which the Church ought surely not to alienate; because in our demand for the opportunity of service in the Church we are only expressing part of a great movement which asks for service in other ways also. We want the Church to understand and to inspire, and I believe—although perhaps to some it seems fantastic—we want her to lead. There are people who say that the Church ought now to consider the Woman's Movement because every other body has welcomed women, every other organisation is making use of them: they are speaking in the Albert Hall, in Hyde Park, in Trafalgar Square, and if that is so, say some, don't you think we might allow them to whisper in a corner of the parish church—provided, of course, that they only spoke to women?

That is not an attitude the Church can afford to take up. The Church should have led the way, and not run behind. It is the tragedy of the Church that she is so anxious to see what is safe, that she loses her leadership in what is right.

It is not because other bodies have welcomed women; it is not because the State has recognised them in various ways, it is not because the war has shown what women can do, that it is now at least safe for the Church of God to begin to consider the Woman's Movement. It is rather that a great movement of the spirit like that should first be tried by the Church to see whether it is of God or not. We should not be *accused* of desiring to turn the world upside down; it should rather be said of us: "These women at least have one note of the Church, they are revolutionary!—they want to turn the world upside down!" Every revolutionary movement is not of God; but at least those who want to turn the world upside down have got one of the marks of a good Christian! I claim, Ladies and Gentlemen, that it is in a spirit of welcome that the Church should have received this movement.

That we want what is new, that we want what is opposed to the world's order, should have been a claim

on the consideration of the Church of Christ rather than an accusation against us; and now we ask once more that the Church, even now, should give a lead about the Woman's Movement. How many names rise to one's mind of the great movements which the Church has cursed until they proved successful, and then it was safe to bless, and she blessed! But in that safety what death! Over and over again what opportunities we have lost in the rise of democracy, in the advance of science, in bettering the condition of the people, in the coming of feminism—one chance after another we have thrown away. And now how much longer is the Church going to refuse us? "The Church," said one to me the other day, "is like a mighty river *almost* run dry." Outside its channel the great movements of the time pour themselves out into unhealthy swamps and marshes, or cut new channels to the sea. And that mighty river has almost run dry! The great flood of the Woman's Movement some of us at least desire to see pour itself, its hopes, its strength, and its ideals into the Church. We have not found greater idealism, or more entire devotion anywhere than we have found in the Woman's Movement; we have not found a truer fellowship, or better colleagues, or a nobler readiness to sacrifice; but we are not satisfied until we can bring all that into the Church—the Church which after all is the Body of Christ, which is so infinitely much to us. We want to bring our life and such gifts as we have to her service. Is she going to refuse them?

After all, people say, you cannot quarrel with the Church, the Church is the Body of Christ, and whatever mistakes she makes there remains that unchangeable fact. Should we not remember also that the Jewish race was the chosen people of God and yet our Lord warned them: "Think not to say to yourselves, We have Abraham to our father. I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." So it is with the Church of England. If she cannot inform and inspire the life of the nation, if she can do nothing but watch these great movements one after

another and fall in behind when the battle is won, if this is all, what is to become of her? Is there any life in such attitude? Is there any hope? We here to-day represent one great stream of vitality, one great movement, and we want to bring that movement, which is our body, into the Church, to be consecrated by her, to be guided, inspired and uplifted. But if she refuses, then it is just one more in that long tragic sequence of mistakes which is drawing her life blood, shortening her arm, impoverishing her powers. It is to prevent this that such a meeting as this has been called this afternoon. (Applause.)

MR. DOUGLAS EYRE.

My Lord Bishop, Ladies and Gentlemen, after the great speech you have just heard, there is not much more for me to say. I want at the outset to say that I agree with every word of that speech. And I want to re-echo also what Dr. Fairfield has said. I have come this afternoon to present this matter from the point of view of the duty of womanhood, and not of the rights of the Woman's Movement. Accustomed as I have been in the past to support the cause of the Woman's Movement in the political sphere, I feel highly honoured in being asked this afternoon to support it on the higher—the religious—plane. And I want also to say that I support the view that both the preceding speakers have presented of the relation of the Woman's Movement in the Church to the layman's position. I myself can see no difference between the male position and the female in this matter. To deny either to the layman or to the laywoman their place firstly in the government, and, secondly, in the ministry of the Church, is absolutely to deny the catholicity of the Church. There is not a note in the teaching of Christ, as far as I can see, of any class or sex distinction. As regards the ministry the position is this, that both laymen and laywomen are bound to be prophets, evangelists, and teachers in the Church.

But before I pass on to speak further of that, I want to say a word about this matter of government. In the

report of the Archbishop's Committee on Church and State, there is outlined a plan for the inclusion of laymen as constituent members of the Central Council of the Church. That central Council is not going to be a Debating Society, it is going to have real power. And so, too, with regard to the proposed Parochial Church Councils. But if laywomen are to be on the electoral roll of the Parish Council and if they are to be constituent members of it, I can see no ground whatever in logic or common sense for preventing them also from being constituent members of the Ruri-Decanal Council, of the Diocesan Council, or—let me use a phrase which the Bishop used and which I much prefer—Synod, or of the Provincial Council, or Synod, or of the Central Council, or Synod. If women get their position on the Parochial Church Councils of the future, it will not be long before they will also get their rightful position side by side with laymen on the Central Body, the Provincial Body, the Diocesan Body, and the Ruri-Decanal Body.

Now, passing from the question of the position of women in government to their position in ministry, I want to say a word upon what is very often put forward in regard to St. Paul. I need not repeat what has been said in relation to the events which occurred during the life of Christ Himself, but I have been extremely impressed with one or two points which have been brought out by women who have written on this subject. I cannot, for instance, think there is more emphatic testimony to the position that women should occupy, than that which is supplied by the record of St. John's Gospel on the confession of and, consequent upon it, the witness given by the woman of Samaria. I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the first messenger of the Resurrection was a woman; nor can I feel that it was otherwise than a fact that women were present in that upper room when the great commission was given: "As My Father sent Me, so send I you." It cannot be denied that they shared in the great event of Pentecost for the purposes of active ministry. But I pass on to St. Paul. What has astonished me more than anything

else is the argument that St. Paul is against this position we are taking up now. St. Paul was living in days which were far different from these. I am not going for a moment to suggest that St. Paul may have been mistaken. Of course he was a man and nothing more than a man, although probably the greatest man that has figured in the pages of Christian history. But St. Paul stood in a time when licentiousness was rampant in the Roman world and, as a writer in a church paper has recently pointed out, when religion and licentiousness happened to be linked together. Knowing, then, what the state of things was in the Roman Empire in those days it would, indeed, have been an extraordinary thing if a man like St. Paul had not given the directions which he gave. But they were directions of the time and of the place—wise, practical precautions which were absolutely essential in view of the circumstances of that age; and lo and behold they are treated as though they represented legislation for the Church universal for all time. I absolutely decline to follow that line of argument. Reference has been made to the fact that there are some curious things in the law. Well, now, lawyers are accustomed in arguing cases to quote from the judgments of great judges; but if you want to succeed in your argument you do not take those dicta of judges out of their context; you apply them to the circumstances of the case in relation to which they are spoken; otherwise you will be angling in the lake of darkness. So it is in relation to these arguments about St. Paul. My own belief is that there can be no real religious revival brought about in the Church of England or without unless we bring our sisters into equal line with ourselves as laymen. (Applause.)

Then, I think, we have got to realise that in all stages of history there must be Movements. Organisations are apt to be wrapped up in tradition and to be warped by authority. Now, the Holy Spirit of God is independent of time or place or organisation. Organisations have often to be set right by Movements and I recognise in this Movement the working of the Spirit of God in our midst.

Reference having been made to the work of one of the Committees of the National Mission I must say a word or two about it. Miss Royden has correctly, I believe, placed before you the facts in relation to the Report of the "Relations" Committee of the Mission on the Woman's Movement. That Committee dealt with this Movement and with other Movements and I am very anxious that each and every one of those Reports should not be put aside, should not be pigeon-holed; but should be brought out and should be published and should be read as a necessary preliminary to the onward progress of the National Mission itself.

Let me then, before I close, declare that my own belief certainly is that women should be admitted to all those functions in the ministry to which laymen are admitted. If laymen are admitted to speak in church women ought to be admitted there too. If laymen are admitted to the diaconate, laywomen also should be so admitted. Spiritual powers are amongst those things unseen and eternal which admit of no material distinctions whatever.

In this new age the most urgent thing is that womanhood, by the power of the spirit of God, should take her part not merely in the regeneration of England but in the regeneration of Humanity. I am extremely anxious that, when we come to consider the Imperial questions that loom big in front of us, we should picture women going forth from this land carrying the message throughout the Empire, and not only throughout the Empire but throughout the world. (Applause.)

My own belief is that we shall never succeed in our missionary enterprise and never succeed in building up the fabric of our Empire on a Christian basis until Church and Nation give much larger scope to the services of our womanhood.

THE HON. SECRETARY at this stage made a few announcements.

DISCUSSION.

CAPTAIN THE REV. HUDSON SHAW (Rector of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate): I have only one practical point to make. I came here not to make a speech but to listen to a sermon. I am one of those people who cannot get on very long without the uplift of a good sermon, and I had not heard one for a year. So I came this afternoon that I might get a good sermon and I have got it. But that is not the first sermon I have heard from Miss Royden. She preached her first sermon in my parish in Rutlandshire fourteen years ago. Well, I think for us to-day it is not worth while troubling our heads very much about Ruridecanal Councils and such like. For myself I should be in favour of all Councils adjourning during the period of the war and for a hundred years afterwards; and I would urge that we concentrate on one reform possible—upon the desirability of the prophetic offices of women being exercised under full episcopal approval in Church. I was one of those who regretted from the depth of my heart that the Bishop of London and other bishops took back their permission for women to speak in Church during the National Mission. I had asked a lady to give six addresses in my church and with my congregation was looking forward to hearing them. I believe that victory in that department is coming just as soon as the lay people of our Church wake up and demand it; at present I want—if I may do so without unbecoming immodesty—I want to point out the singular position in which we stand at the present moment. Women can preach in church at the present time if they do not mind doing it through the mouth of the clergyman. Miss Royden preached in St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, two years ago, and I am bound to say that that was the only occasion in my experience when a large number of people of the congregation came up to offer their grateful thanks to the clergyman for his sermon he had preached. It was

Miss Royden's sermon word for word that I preached. It had a certain amount of eloquence and it had a considerable amount of unsoundness and I thought it my painful duty to refute that sermon the next week. I did so, but I got no thanks, and the opinion still prevails in the congregation that the first sermon was the one that really counted. But what an absurd position it is! No power on earth, legal or otherwise—I do not think even episcopal—can prevent a clergyman from preaching a woman's sermon from a pulpit from which she may not preach it herself. The whole thing is preposterous. I believe that the vast majority of our lay people are perfectly ready, if only the women prophesy and will put on a decent cassock and surplice and something on their heads, are perfectly ready to listen to approved, appointed women sent out as deacons to preach the Word of God. And we badly need more power, for at the present time—we had better recognise it, the Mission has shown it—we are a small minority living in a pagan nation! (Cheers.)

THE CHAIRMAN read the following question sent up to the platform :—

“Are deacons allowed to speak in churches? And if so are deaconesses?”

The curious thing is that when a man is made a deacon he is given authority to exercise the office of deacon and to preach if he be specially licensed thereto by the bishop. Those words are stated at the ordination of every deacon. But the office of deacon has so changed in the Church that there are a great many deacons whom I have known who, without exaggeration, have been ordained on the Sunday morning and who have preached that same Sunday evening. Well, that is not a thing at all to be desired. Deaconesses are distinctly in accordance with the teaching of the Church of England but by the bishops they are precluded from preaching in church.

MRS. HUDSON LYLE: My Lord Bishop, Ladies and Gentlemen, I will only keep you for a few moments. May I beg this of my own sex—not to be too proud but

to take whatever positions are now open to us and to use them as far as possible? I know we are snubbed, but we are now used to that a great many of us, and have evolved a thoroughly thick skin. I will give you a little illustration of what I mean. Take the Church Council. I live in a parish where, I am glad to say, there are some ladies on the Parochial Church Council. But the number is strictly limited, although there are a great many women in that parish, some of them extremely able and many of them doing good work. Three years ago the question was brought up that more women should be allowed on the Council. Every man in the room seemed to be against it. This year I began again, determined to try and manage better. I moved that instead of five being on the Council—though these five had been on a long time, no one wished them excluded—there should be a larger number. I was told that I was out of order. I asked why. Because I had not given notice at a previous meeting. I asked when the last meeting was held. I knew, of course, that it was a year before and that the next would be a year hence. Well, I am a patient woman and I gave notice that I would move one year hence that at least eight women should be on the Council instead of five out of twenty-eight. As there are some twenty women to one man in that place I do not think the representation is fair at present. Why so many men wish to keep office I do not quite know, for the record of their attendance is very bad. My belief is that the men are of this opinion, that even if they do rarely attend by taking it in turns they can still keep a majority. I was told by a man there that I was making myself unpopular. I knew that. One reason, I think, why there is a desire to keep women off these bodies is because some men fear we may find out they are not the wise, heaven-born, demi-gods some of them would like us to think.

Then another point as to women speaking in church. I was one of those who suffered a good deal at the time of the Mission, for in speaking to rough girls and women it is much more difficult to secure and maintain a de-

votional spiritual atmosphere in a music hall or other such place than it would be in one of our beautiful parish churches. Personally I think it was a great mistake to exclude us and I hope the mistake will be rectified.

But I do not want any of us to get disheartened, at any rate, do not let us show any bitterness in controversy. At the same time do not let over-modesty or humility keep us aside because, honestly, in our parish, our diocese, our Church, our country, there is a great work for us to do.

DR. WEITHRECHT: May I speak on a practical aspect of the question connected with the Woman's Movement—not that in any way would I belittle the world-wide atmosphere of it? When one has lived in India for thirty years and has seen the change in women there, and the still further change that has come over them in the last five years, one feels that this Movement is indeed one that embraces the destinies of the race. But there are very practical questions, too, before us. Allusion has been made, or reference has been made, to the diaconate, and I think all of us are aware that there is a diaconate open to women. I do not wish to raise the question about speaking in church in this connection, but a friend of mine only recently, speaking to me about the diaconate, said, with regard to the future of the Church, a man who studies affairs: "Do you not think that we shall certainly have after the war a very modified diaconate, which we might call lay, in which those who are ordained to the office of deacon will not necessarily leave their occupations but will carry on the ministry of the Word in the Church?"

At any rate my point is this, that as things at present stand, the Church from of old has an open door for the ministry of women in the Church. There has been a diaconate we know at least from the second century. We know, too, that in the nineteenth century the great needs of the new industrial and economic life of England, and of countries on the Continent, called forth the need for female diaconate, that it was revived at first in what I

may call a more informal manner, as with the Mildmay Deaconesses, and, later on, through closer connection with the Church, as when Elizabeth Ferrars was ordained by the bishop. Now we have ten deaconess houses, and in those houses women have the opportunity of training for the service of the Church. Not only this, but, at the present moment, following upon the National Mission, the archbishops have appointed a committee which has to consider the state of the ministry of women in the Church. That committee is shortly to meet and, after due consideration, it will report. If I may venture to say—there is only one thing I hope, and that is that there will be a woman or two on it. At any rate, that committee has to report on this question of the ministry that women can exercise for the benefit of the Church in the future.

To come down to the bedrock, when you have a Deaconess Institution such as I am connected with, you want persons to train for the work. We have got the staff, we have got the lectures, we have the instruction, but we have not got the women students. I know a good many friends who are working in the same line in connection with other institutions for the training of deaconesses, and the complaint from all is one and the same—Give us women to train. Here, my friends, is a form of service, and just in a form which I think may satisfy many great and legitimate desires. It may not go to the length every one will desire, but, at any rate, it is a considerable step towards it, and, to use the slang phrase of the day, it is up to you of the Woman's Movement to produce the women who will offer themselves to be trained. For, mark you, all along the line the effort is being made to secure, not only the due recognition of women in the ministry of the Church, but larger responsibility and due remuneration, so that they shall be free from care. If these things are being provided for the women surely we ought to see a great access of candidates to be trained for work of that kind. And if they will come forward at this time, then, at the close of the war, when we shall need their services, they will have been

adequately trained. Women must have had some training and work before they can be fitted for the great responsibility which we hope will be theirs and which should be theirs in the Church.

THE CHAIRMAN, having read the following question, proceeded to answer it :—

“ May I ask the Bishop what body can give the right women authority to preach in Church? Whether it is decided by vote, and when is its next meeting? ”

I am afraid the only corporate body that could express opinion upon it would be the Convocation of Canterbury and York, and it is a question whether we shall send a resolution to that body, which is going to meet very soon. But each bishop himself if he chose could give a laywoman authority to preach in church. But I do not think it is at all likely that individual bishops will do it, because we hope the question will come before the whole body of bishops and that some general decision may be come to. At present, if a woman wanted to preach in church, the obvious thing to do would be to apply to her parish clergyman and through him to the bishop—there would be no meeting, but an answer would be duly given. It is clear that no person may preach in church without the authority and without the permission of the bishop of the diocese.

MISS ROYDEN: I would like to make a practical suggestion. When I moved a resolution in the National Mission Council about women speaking in church, it was stated by Dr. Robinson that the power to give permission lay entirely within the discretion of the bishops. But some bishops, I understand, hold that it does not lie in their discretion, and that they have no power at all legally to give the right to any lay person to speak in church; they hold that such a permission would be *ultra vires*, and consequently in their dioceses no lay person is allowed to speak. But the majority of the bishops believe that they have the power to license lay speakers, and, as you know, the Bishops of London and

of Chelmsford did give a certain limited permission to women to speak during the National Mission. When they withdrew that permission they gave a promise that they would “ take counsel with their episcopal brethren ” after the Mission on this point. I think several of the Bishops, and notably the Bishop of Oxford, feel that although they have technically a legal right individually to give permission, they would think it morally wrong for an individual bishop to take such a step except in agreement with the other bishops.

The Bishop of Oxford has been a good deal criticised for taking that line. I must say it seems to me not unreasonable. But I think it is also reasonable to ask that if the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Chelmsford do take counsel with their episcopal brethren (and they have promised that they will) we should have the right to lay our case before them either in the person of some member, for instance, of the Church League, or through one of the bishops who supports our position. In any case, it would be a great help if members of the laity, and indeed also the clergy, would individually write to their diocesan bishop, expressing the hope that the question may be raised and that they may see their way to giving women permission to speak in church. Those who do not wish women to speak have written letters to an extent which has caused the post office almost to break down! It would be difficult for the clergy, it would be difficult for the bishops to give a lead if they have no idea that there is any demand on the part of the laity to hear women in church. Unfortunately, those of us who want to see women speak in church have been very much hampered by the desire not to act in any way which should wreck the prospects of the National Mission. As a practical piece of help I suggest that you should write to your diocesan bishop to express the hope that he will consider this subject in conference with his brother bishops and also to make it quite clear on which side you are. I do not think you could do a more practical bit of work at this moment than that.

THE CHAIRMAN read a question as to whether special knowledge or training was required before a license to preach could be given to a woman.

The answer to that must rest with the bishop of the diocese. So far as her theological views are concerned there would have to be an examination before license could be given to preach just as is required in the case of a diocesan lay reader. We hope and trust that before long there may be opportunities for women to become deeply instructed in these matters, in Colleges which we trust will come before long.

The resolution was then put to the Conference and was carried with two dissentients.

THE CHAIRMAN announced that it would be sent to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and to the Head of the Houses of Laymen.

With a vote of thanks to the Bishop of Willesden for presiding and to the various speakers, proposed by the Rev. F. M. Green, the proceedings terminated.

The Woman's Movement.

[Statement adopted and Resolutions passed by the Central Committee of the National Mission of Repentance and Hope, July, 1916.]

RELATIONS WITH THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENT.

That whereas, before the War, the "Woman's Movement" was not only agitating this country, but also was manifest in many other parts of the world, this Council, having given serious consideration to the subject, desires to submit to the Church the following statement of the principles and aims of the movement, as it understands them:—

(i.) That underlying this movement there are moral and spiritual elements which demand the frank recognition and close sympathy of the Church, viz.: the motions of a new moral consciousness concerning the personal and social status and conditions of women's life;

(ii.) That the substance of this new moral consciousness may be defined as the spiritual awakening of both women and men to women's need of greater freedom and opportunity—

(a) for self-realisation and self-development; and

(b) for extended labour and service in the community, *i.e.*, in both Church and State.

(iii.) That this awakening necessarily involves conflict with such laws and customs, habits and traditions, in the social régime inherited from the past, as now prevent large numbers of women from realising freely their personal and social possibilities;

(iv.) And that thence (from the clash between the new moral consciousness and the external arrangements of Society) there has resulted—

(a) A revolt against the current dual standard of sex morality, which unjustly differentiates between men and women to the great hurt of both, and

(b) A demand for the upholding of a true and equal standard of sex and other morality for men and women alike; and

(c) A protest against the economic servitude and dependence of women as indicated by the common and

systematic sweating and underpayment of women's labour, together with a demand that "capacity not sex" shall be the criterion of both the nature and the reward of women's service.

(d) A claim for the civic recognition of women by the State as enfranchised citizens, and the removal of legal disabilities in many spheres, including the legal subordination of one sex to the other—a claim supported by the large service rendered by women to the nation as mothers, school-councillors, and teachers, Poor Law Guardians, hospital governors, and nurses, and in many other civic spheres; by the growing entry of the State into the affairs of women in domestic and industrial life; and by the census disclosures of the fact that nearly six millions of women and girls are engaged in wage-earning occupations, a number greatly increased during the war.

And this Council, recognising that these spiritual aims and ideals of the Woman's Movement, apart from the question of its particular political and other claims, are in harmony with the teaching of Christ and His Church as to the equality of men and women in the sight of God—equality in privilege, equality in calling, equality in opportunity of service; and in anticipation of the momentous problems in relation to this Movement which will confront both Church and Nation after the War, urges upon the Church, as part of its work in connection with the National Mission, the necessity of giving grave consideration to the spirit and aims of the Woman's Movement, as described in the above statement, in the light of the principles of Christianity; and, further, this Council urges upon the Church the importance of securing adequate representation of women upon its conferences, councils, and assemblies, in relation both to the National Mission and also to the permanent work and mission of the Church.

The following Resolution was also passed:—

To urge upon the Bishops the importance of giving definite directions as to the best ways of using the services and receiving the message of women speakers, whether in church or elsewhere.

APPENDIX II.

The following letters were read from the platform at the Conference on February 3rd, 1917:—

BISHOP OF LONDON.

DEAR MISS CORBEN,

I am glad to see that the Bishop of Willesden is taking the chair at your Meeting as he will state with fairness and force the case for a greater recognition of the lay position of women in the Church of England. What has, of course, "fouled the pitch" and caused so much bitterness and misunderstanding is the idea that those who advocate this recognition are aiming at claiming the priesthood for women. The clearer it is made that this is an entire mistake, the stronger becomes the ground of those who claim their legitimate place in the organization and councils of the Church, and I hope that your Conference to-night will have this end in view.

Yours very sincerely,

A. F. LONDON.

BISHOP OF KENSINGTON.

MY DEAR MISS CORBEN,

I very much regret that my absence from London on February 3rd makes it impossible for me to attend the Conference at the Church House. I need hardly say that I cordially support the resolution to be proposed, and I have no doubt that it will be enthusiastically received and carried by the Meeting.

I hope it may lead to a forward movement being made by the authorities to enable Churchwomen to render that service to both Church and nation of which they have proved themselves so entirely capable.

I send you my best wishes for the success of the Conference.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

JOHN KENSINGTON.

MRS. HICKS FOR THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

DEAR MADAM,

The Bishop of Lincoln asks me to reply to your letter. He regrets very much that he will be quite unable to be present at your Conference on February 5th. He quite

approves of the resolution that you sent him, and begs to send you a copy of a considered statement upon the question which he wrote some months ago.*

The Bishop is making steady progress, although the convalescence seems slow,

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
AGNES M. HICKS.

BISHOP OF HEREFORD.

DEAR MADAM,

There is, I am sorry to say, no chance of my being able to attend your Conference. But I hope that due weight will be given to the great amount of good work that women do for the Church at the present time.

Yours very truly,
J. HEREFORD.

BISHOP OF SOUTHAMPTON.

DEAR MISS CORBEN,

Many thanks for your letter inviting me to be present at your public Conference at the Church House on February 3rd. I am sorry to say that it would not be possible for me to be in Town that afternoon.

You are quite at liberty to say that I am in general agreement with the resolutions passed by the Central Committee of the National Mission of Repentance and Hope in July last year. You know that I sympathise with the aims and aspirations of the Woman's Movement, and that the central principles upon which it is based correspond with my convictions of what Christianity teaches. You know, also, that I was unable to consent to some of the methods of the Women's Suffrage Movement; and I could not concur in some of the recent demands which have been made by those associated with it, *e.g.*, that women should be admitted to the priesthood of the Church. With certain reservations respecting which opinion among yourselves is, I imagine, divided, I am anxious to give you every support in my power.

Believe me,
Yours sincerely,
E. SOUTHAMPTON.

* This statement is published in the C.L.W.S. Monthly Paper for February, 1917.

BISHOP OF BUCKINGHAM.

DEAR MADAM,

As I am on the eve of starting for Egypt I can do nothing more than express my hope that you will have a successful meeting on February 3rd, and say that I am entirely in sympathy with the resolutions to be proposed.

Yours sincerely,
E. D. BUCKINGHAM.

BISHOP OF LEICESTER.

DEAR MADAM,

The Bishop asks me to thank you for your letter and to say that he regrets that owing to other work he will be unable to be present at the Conference on the 'Position of Laywomen in the Church of England,' but trusts that much good will result from the Conference and light be thrown on this anxious problem.

Believe me,
Yours faithfully,
J. N. R. SMITH, *Secretary*.

BISHOP OF GUILDFORD.

DEAR MADAM,

I regret that I am unable to be present at your Meeting on February 3rd, but I am fully in sympathy with the resolution that is being proposed, and hope that it will receive strong and enthusiastic support.

Very sincerely yours,
JOHN GUILDFORD.

BISHOP HAMILTON-BAYNES.

DEAR MISS CORBEN,

I am sorry that I cannot be in London for your meeting on February 3rd. If I could have been present I should have given my cordial support to the statement issued by the Central Committee of the National Mission.

Believe me,
Sincerely Yours,
A. HAMILTON-BAYNES (Bishop).

COUNTESS OF SELBORNE.

DEAR MISS CORBEN,

I am very sorry but I do not expect to be in London on February 3rd; otherwise I should have had much pleasure in supporting the Bishop of Willesden on the platform on that day.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

MAUD SELBORNE.

MRS. PAGET.

I am afraid that the notice for February 3rd has come too late, and I am already engaged.

You might like to know that women will shortly be allowed to sit on Ruridecanal Conferences in the London Diocese.

HON. MRS. LYTTLETON.

DEAR MADAM,

I am extremely sorry that I shall not be able to be present at the Conference on February 3rd, but I cannot get free from my work.

Wishing you all success,

Yours sincerely,

EDITH LYTTLETON.

MISS CARTA STURGE.

DEAR MISS CORBEN,

It is with very great regret that I find myself unable to accept your kind invitation to support the Bishop of Willesden and all who are taking part in the meeting regarding the 'Laywoman in the Church of England' for February 3rd. Unfortunately, I have an engagement here which I am bound to keep on that day, so that it is impossible for me to come to town.

But I wish to express my hearty support of the objects set forth in your statement and wish much success to your efforts in so admirable a cause.

Yours very truly,

M. CARTA STURGE.

THE REV. TISSINGTON TATLOW.

DEAR MADAM,

I am so sorry that I cannot be at your meeting on the position of laywomen in the Church of England on February 3rd, but I have a previous engagement.

I am in full sympathy with the purpose of your meeting and hope it will be successful.

Yours very truly,

TISSINGTON TATLOW,

General Secretary Student Christian Movement.

THE BISHOP OF SHEFFIELD.

DEAR MADAM,

I am very sorry that I cannot be present at your meeting on Saturday. All I can say, with regard to the Lay Women's Movement of the Church of England, is that I am entirely in favour of their being on both the Rural Decanal and the Diocesan Conferences.

Yours sincerely,

LEONARD H. SHEFFIELD.

Regrets at absence were received from: BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH, BISHOP OF LICHFIELD, BISHOP OF STEPNEY, BISHOP WELLDON, BISHOP OF HULL, BISHOP OF GRANTHAM, BISHOP OF JARROW, FATHER NICHOLAI VELIMIROVITCH, FATHER PAUL BULL, C.R., THE REV. E. A. MORGAN, THE REV. H. G. VEAZEY, THE LADY RHONDDA, MRS. SCHARLIEB, MR. AND MRS. CECIL CHAPMAN, LADY CONSTANCE LYTTON, DR. JANE WALKER, MRS. MONTGOMERY, MRS. MAUD, MISS TUKE, LADY WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE, MRS. KNIGHT BRUCE, MRS. H. R. L. SHEPPARD, MISS E. C. GREGORY, and many others.

The following arrived too late to be read at the Conference:—

THE BISHOP OF COLCHESTER.

DEAR MADAM,

I must apologise for not having answered your letter about the meeting this afternoon. I should have come if I had been in town, and anyhow meant to write and say so, but being away from home I had not the letter by me, and it slipped my memory.

I hope that you had a successful afternoon.

Yours very truly,

R. H. COLCHESTER.

DR. HELEN HANSON.

(Telegram from Malta.)

"Best wishes."

APPENDIX III.

PRESS COMMENTS OF THE CONFERENCE.

"It certainly was a remarkable gathering, that Conference on 'The Laywoman in the Church of England,' in the Church House on Saturday afternoon. Paradoxically it was not a Conference at all, for all the speaker's arts could not induce an opponent to come forward. But it was a model meeting, well attended and well arranged, punctual, deeply spiritual, though not insensible to humour, and conducted throughout with the conviction of firm faith and with admirable courtesy to opponents. In fact, Miss Royden took us all by surprise by a little disclosure. It seems that the last clause of the resolutions of the Central Committee of the National Mission was incomplete. By some misadventure a sentence was omitted to the effect that the demand for Episcopal directions as to the best ways of using the services and receiving the message of women speakers was to be 'subject only to those restrictions which are observed in the case of laymen.' Thus the question of women priests was cut out from the beginning. At the most it is a question of the Diaconate. The angry controversy, which was not conducted very creditably to Churchmen, was based on an utter misapprehension.

"The Bishop of Willesden presided genially and tactfully, and clearly prepared for any emergency....

"Dr. Letitia Fairfield moved the main resolution.... Very beautifully she emphasised service, ministry, the point of view which did not seek rights, save God's rights over our lives and God's opportunities for using us to His service. Women were searching their hearts lest they were keeping from God that service which was His. The audience was clearly moved by this fresh statement of ministry.

"Miss Royden sounded the democratic note.... She gave the story of the resolution as I have indicated it, and then went on to a passage of close reasoning on a wonderfully high plane.... It was a great speech, inspired with the magnetism of intense personal conviction and deep spirituality.

"Mr. Douglas Eyre followed, expounding St. Paul's attitude afresh and bringing to a focus the idea of the Diaconate and representation on Church bodies....

"Behind the speeches and the enthusiasm the central idea took form. The question of a Diaconate for men and for women is clear before us. There are many men and women available. Their services might be graded, much as the Bishops grade lay-readers now. It has ceased to be a woman's question. It never was a question of women priests—even the question of women preachers is subsidiary. It is a demand for a thorough reconsideration of the present un-Catholic system of transient apprentice deacons. It is a demand for a surrender of the conception of the 'clerk' as the only educated Churchman, the only official who is authoritatively permitted to articulate the scholarship and the aims and the influence of the Church. It is a demand for an overhauling of the professional conception of 'ministry,' and equally a demand for a clearer idea of the priesthood. There is a golden opportunity for statesmanship. The Civil Service alone has hundreds of University men who, in former generations, would have passed from the University to the sacred ministry. Many live in Settlements and workmen's dwellings. Similarly there are hundreds of women, and there will soon be yet more, whose services are at the disposal of the Church, ready to serve humbly according to their abilities. The obstacles are not to be despised, but once the opponents realise that this movement means the safeguarding of the true Catholic order and the consecration of the new spirit of democracy, I have not lost faith in their willingness to look more kindly on a movement which most grievously has been misunderstood."—Mr. John Lee in *The Guardian*, February 8th, 1917.

"ON the initiative of the Church League for Women's Suffrage a public conference was held on Saturday last at the Church House. It was remarkable chiefly for the revelations made by Miss A. Maude Royden as to the inner history of the last clause of the resolutions of the Central Committee of the National Mission, but secondly for the more definite position now taken up by this movement as claiming for women all opportunities for service now enjoyed by laymen. This includes the diaconate, apparently, and it will probably have the result of forcing the whole question of the diaconate into the foreground. The speeches were throughout on a very high level, and though specially courteous and pressing invitations were made to those who thought differently to come forward the invitations were not accepted. Most marked was the profound spiritual note and the emphasis laid upon a ministry of service

rather than a ministry of utterance merely. The hall was crowded by an audience which contained a strangely large number of elderly men, and it followed the proceedings with a closeness of interest which gave evidence of real sympathy with the speakers.

"The resolution was passed unanimously and enthusiastically.—*Church Times*, February 8th, 1917.

"THE desire of women for greater freedom for service and self-expression has to a large extent been realised by the many new fields of service opened out to them by the war, but it must be confessed that those women who wished the Church to give them a similar freedom and increased opportunity, have been doomed to disappointment. The Church has so far lagged behind in expressing any corporate recognition of the worth of women's service.

"In spite of the prevailing inequalities, however, the women have gone on, conscious that some day a newly-awakened Church would become convinced of the impossibility of the position it was endeavouring to hold.

"The Committee of the National Mission gave the first evidence of this awakening when they passed their much-discussed resolution in regard to the Church's attitude to the Women's Movement. It was at any rate a beginning—a step in the right direction; and one felt that the meeting held by the Church League for Women's Suffrage on Saturday last was a recognition of the fact. There was a high tone about the gathering which should have done much to disarm any opponents who might have been present, but if such were numbered among the audience they were either too timid to join in the open conference, or—what was perhaps more likely—had become converted by the end of the afternoon!—*Church Family Newspaper*, February 8th, 1917.

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THE League of the Church Militant

(Anglican.)

(Formerly : The Church League for Women's Suffrage.)

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

MEMBERSHIP.

Men and women are eligible for membership who

(a) are members of the Church of England, or of Churches in full communion therewith; (b) approve of the objects of the League; (c) agree to pay an annual subscription as fixed by the Branch to which the member belongs.

The minimum annual subscription to the Central Branch is ~~1s~~ 2/6.

OBJECTS.

1. To urge the Church to fuller 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 establishment of equal rights and opportunities for men and women both in Church and State.

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

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

[P.T.O.]

Title and Objects.

In designating ourselves "The League of the Church Militant" we are not, as some feared might be supposed, arrogating to ourselves a title which belongs to the Church as a whole. We do not claim to be the whole Church, nor to contain within our all too scanty membership all those forces which allow the Church to be described as militant, not only according to the divine intention but in actual fact. But we are profoundly convinced that the Church, to quote an episcopal utterance, is "not half militant enough," and we desire our League to be a rallying ground for all Church people who wish to see the Church rousing itself to more open and strenuous warfare against evil and more especially against evil as it is embedded in the institutions, laws and customs of the community in which we live. We believe that the Church has failed in large measure to accomplish its work in the world because it has too often been content to proclaim the ethical teaching of Christianity without venturing to demand for such teaching a social application—an application, that is to say, not only in society but by society as a corporate whole; that if the Kingdom of God is to come amongst us that demand must be insistently made; that it can only be made effectively by a Church which is manifestly seeking to express in its own ordered life the principles which it proclaims; and that the League of the Church Militant will abundantly justify its existence if it can contribute in some small measure to rouse the Church to more strenuous advocacy and more consistent practice of what the social ethics of Christianity demand.

We do not seek to limit that demand in any respect if we emphasise the great utterance of St. Paul in which he declares that in Christ distinctions of race, class and sex find no place, that all are one in Him. That utterance is the foundation principle of Christian ethics; and there is scarcely an evil which afflicts our common life to-day which is not rooted in long-standing neglect of this great charter of humanity. If the Church of Christ is to fulfil its part in the world to-day it must

do more than lip-homage to that charter, and it must not fear to incur the hostility of any who find their interest in ignoring it, or whom inveterate prejudice has blinded to its true implications. The refusal of enfranchisement to women on the score of sex was a violation of that charter so flagrant, so persistent, so bitterly resented, that it was inevitable that all efforts should in the first place be concentrated upon its removal; just as in earlier ages those who recognised the sacred rights of humanity concentrated all their efforts on the abolition of personal slavery. But to-day we dare not limit our efforts to completing the vindication of women's claim to an equal place with men in the life of Church and State. For racial prejudices and racial tyrannies still survive, and there is an industrial servitude to-day hardly less humiliating and at times even more cruel than the old-time slavery now banished from the civilised world. If the principles of our faith are to prevail no question of race, class, or sex must be allowed to hamper any in the unrestricted enjoyment of human rights, least of all in the possession and use of the widest possible opportunity for self-development and social service. The accident of birth must debar none from sharing in those conditions and opportunities which make for moral and physical well-being and usefulness.

It will be the duty of the League of the Church Militant to give active support to all well-considered proposals for the removal or mitigation of social evils, to take its part in helping in every effort to establish those conditions of human life which the law of Christ's Kingdom demands. From time to time the energies of its members may be concentrated upon the achievement of some specific reform, as in the past they were concentrated upon the enfranchisement of women. But its aim will always look beyond the immediate purpose of the hour. Its members will find their bond of fellowship in the conviction that Christ came to redeem not only individuals but the whole social order; that His work is entrusted for its completion to His Church; that the first essential for the realisation of His gracious purpose is that the Church should be roused to recognise the scope of its mission and gird itself for conflict with the forces of selfishness and ignorance which oppose themselves. We must rouse the Church.

WOMEN AND THE PRIESTHOOD.

At a Special Council of the League held on April 30th, 1919, the following Resolution was passed:—

“To challenge definitely (whilst not restricting the general programme of the League) what has hitherto been the custom of the Church of confining the priesthood to men.”

I desire to become a Member of the LEAGUE OF THE CHURCH MILITANT.

* My Annual Subscription of £ : s. d.

{ is enclosed herewith *
{ will be sent in the month of*

* I enclose 2s. 6d. as an Annual Postal Subscription to
“THE CHURCH MILITANT.”

* I enclose a DONATION of £ : s. d.

Name

Address

* Strike out what is inapplicable, and fill up blank.

Please tear off and send with Contribution to
The Secretary, L.C.M., Church House, Dean's Yard, S.W.1.

J. E. Francis, The Athenæum Press, 11 & 13 Bream's Buildings, London, E.C.4

Women and the Priesthood.

It is the conviction of the members of the League of Church Militant that the time has come when it is necessary to do more than say that, apart from the apparent witness of catholic custom, they can discern no reason why women should be excluded from the priesthood. They believe it to be incumbent upon them to urge that what threatens to be the last remaining sex disability should be removed, and that the Church should call to its sacred ministry those women as well as men who believe they are inwardly moved to undertake the priestly office, under such disciplinary regulations as it may judge best for the edification of its members.

They feel that as matters now stand the Church is perpetuating at the very innermost shrine of its ordered life a tradition, partly Jewish, partly pagan, which the rest of the world has in theory abandoned or is on the eve of abandoning, a tradition which is the fruitful source of much which is amiss in sex relationships, which is wholly inconsistent with the Catholic faith—the tradition of the inferiority of women. One of our Bishops has recently told us, whilst repudiating the thought that women are inferior in nature to men, that women are subordinate to men, that to man belongs a permanent and essential headship, and that this truth has been embodied in the refusal of the Church to call women to the priesthood. Very well. We repudiate “subordination” just as earnestly as we repudiate “inferiority”; we deny that upon man there is conferred according to the divine intention a permanent and essential headship. Can it be a matter of wonder that we feel bound to call in question a restriction which is openly set forth as witnessing in the ordered life of the Church to a principle which with all our hearts we believe to be a hoary falsehood, fraught with pernicious consequences to the society which accepts it and necessarily antagonistic to the foundation principles of the Catholic faith.

For that we take to be the essence of the whole matter. If “the priesthood for men only” were a claim advanced solely on grounds of practical convenience, if it had all along been admitted that women were capable of the priesthood and their exclusion from it had been justified on grounds of expediency alone, then, though we should have denied the expediency and felt that the Church was rejecting much needed service and that women were being improperly debarred from work to which they believed the Holy Spirit was calling them, we should have admitted that there was much to be said on both sides, and our challenge to the Church to reconsider its ways would have been made in milder tones than it is to-day. For to-day we have no care to dissemble our indignation that one of the most liberal-minded prelates in England should stand forth as the exponent of views which involve acceptance of the doctrine of

male domination (but perhaps "headship" no more involves "domination" than essential and permanent "subordination" implies "inferiority"!) and that the voice of authority on all sides should be loud in asserting that there are fundamental reasons which render women unfit to minister at the altar.

But though we are indignant we are not disloyal. We shall promote no schism. We shall not counsel our members to withdraw from altars at which they are forbidden to minister nor urge them to refuse to contribute to the maintenance of a ministry in which they may not share. We shall not seek to organise parliamentary pressure to further the cause we have at heart. We shall make our appeal to the Church. We shall rely on the truth and the truth will prevail.

And though indignant we are not unreasonable. We are perfectly aware that no Bishop can rightly ordain women to the priesthood on his own individual responsibility. If any are disposed to argue that not even the whole Anglican Communion could rightly decide on such a step without the concurrent assent of the rest of Christendom, we shall give attentive hearing to such arguments even if we should ultimately come to reject them as inadequate. We are conscious that there are many difficult questions which must be determined before any woman can be ordained a priest. Is a vocation to the ministry compatible in the case of a woman with a vocation to matrimony? If not, must women priests be vowed to celibacy, and, if so, at what age should such vows be accepted? These are only some of the problems which will call for solution, which would make precipitate action unthinkable. But we do desire a speedy acknowledgment on the part of the Church that woman is capable of the priesthood and that any hesitation about throwing open the priesthood to women is due to reasons of oecumenical statesmanship or domestic convenience, not to reasons of principle. When that has been explicitly affirmed and accepted we should hope to be able to show that the practical difficulties were not insuperable.

There are those who believe that women are capable of the priesthood and desire that they should serve in the priesthood, but are yet persuaded that the time is not ripe for such a change. In a sense we agree with them. The time will not be ripe for such a change until our Church as a whole feels that it is guided to make it by the Spirit of God, and at present our Church is conscious of no such guidance. But the guidance of the Holy Spirit is rarely if ever vouchsafed in the first instance to the Church as a whole. One here, one there, becomes conscious of a new aspect of divine truth and proclaims what his eyes have seen. At first his words seem as idle tales, his vision is ridiculed; but the very opposition he encounters makes his testimony more insistent, and by and by all perceive the truth and wonder that it was ever hidden from them. In the spiritual world the dawn will never come if the heralds of the dawn hold their peace.

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League of the Church Militant.

OCCASIONAL PRAYERS.

LET us give thanks for the fuller life and higher honour accorded to women in recent times in response to the prayers of God's people.

WE thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast heard the prayers of Thy people in past days and hast granted us to see the fulfilment of long-cherished desires and hopes; we thank Thee for the enfranchisement of women in Church and State; for fuller opportunities for service in the common life; for the passing away of ancient prejudices; for the overthrow of ancient tyrannies; for the new era of freedom dawning for the world and the opportunity for women to share therein; and we beseech Thee to give the women of our country and of all countries grace to use aright the new powers committed to them so that in their exercise they may seek constantly to glorify Thy name and hasten the coming of Thy kingdom, who with the Son and Holy Ghost art one God, blessed for evermore.

Let us give thanks for the fullness of Truth revealed in Christ and for its progressive recognition in the world of men.

O GOD, who didst send Thy Son into the world that in Him Thy truth should be fully known, we praise and bless Thy Holy Name that in Him are all treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that through Him there is guidance for every difficulty and light for every problem of the humanity He has redeemed; we thank Thee that all down the ages Thy Church has been learning to see more clearly and apply more fearlessly the truth He has revealed; and we pray Thee that in our day and generation we may be earnest to know and loyal to fulfil His adorable will who with Thee and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest one God world without end.

Let us praise God for all who in successive ages have responded to the guidance vouchsafed to them and in the face of scorn and opposition have witnessed to the truth made known to them in Christ.

UNTO Thee, O God, be praise and thanksgiving for those who in past ages have been chosen by Thee to proclaim to others fresh aspects of Thy unchanging truth. We bless Thee for their faithful witness; for their devoted lives; for the fruits of their toil and suffering which enrich human life to-day. We pray Thee to have them for ever in Thy holy keeping and to lead them ever onward into deeper experiences of Thy truth and love. And for ourselves we pray that taught by their example and following in their footsteps we may count no effort too painful, no sacrifice too great to win for ourselves and for those who shall come after us a clearer knowledge of Thy blessed will and a way of life more in harmony with Thy loving purpose; and this we ask for Christ our Saviour's sake.

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit may continue His gracious work and bestow upon the faithful people of God to-day the guidance needed to deal with the new problems of our time.

GRANT us, we beseech Thee, O Lord our God, and to all Thy faithful people, the continual guidance of Thy Holy Spirit, that in all the difficulties and perplexities of life we may know what Thou wouldest have us do. Banish from our hearts all rash self-confidence. Free us from the power of prejudice, from the tyranny of use and wont. Make us humble and teachable. Above all, grant us, we pray Thee, a real desire to be guided by Thy Spirit, a true purpose to follow whither He would lead us, a solemn realisation that only as we so follow can we reach the haven where we would be, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us specially pray that in all that concerns the dignity and service of women in the life of Church and State the Holy Spirit may make plain to the faithful the mind of Christ.

O GOD, who didst send forth Thy Son born of a woman that in Him all might see the express image of Thy person and the perfect pattern for all mankind, we pray Thee that Thy Holy Spirit may

teach Thy Church to regard only His will and purpose in all that concerns the position and service of women. Free the hearts of Thy people from all prejudices and enable them to discern the truth as it is in Jesus, for His name's sake.

Let us pray for ourselves and for all associated with us in our work that we may hold fast the truth revealed in past ages to the Church of God; that no engrossment in the special problems and causes of our time may make us careless concerning the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

O GOD, who hast taught Thy Church to confess the true faith of Thy Holy Name, grant that that faith may ever be precious to our hearts and as we have received it from those who have gone before us so may we hand it on to those who shall come after us, confessing Thee the Father of an infinite majesty, Thine honourable, true and only Son, also the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and holding fast all those things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us pray for the Bishops that in all their deliberations concerning the ministry of women in the Church of God they may seek only to know and do the will of Christ.

WE pray Thee, Heavenly Father, for the Bishops that they may be taught by Thy Holy Spirit to know and do Thy will in all things touching the life and worship of Thy Holy Church; and specially we ask that Thou wilt make plain to them Thy will concerning the ministry of women in Thy Church, that they may take such order as shall best serve the cause of true religion amongst us, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us pray for all our fellow-members in the Body of Christ who have not yet recognised what we believe to be the guidance God is granting to us to-day; that they may be united with us now in the bonds of Christian charity and in God's good time in the perception of all 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 onward into truer knowledge of Thy word and will, free us from those differences of thought and outlook which now hinder our fellowship, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Let us pray for ourselves that in conduct and temper we may commend the cause we seek to advance.

WE pray Thee, Heavenly Father, that as we believe Thou hast called us to claim for women a larger place in the life and work of Thy Church so Thou wilt enable us to overcome all faults of character and temper which might hinder the fulfilment of our task. Keep us from all bitterness, from all contempt for those who differ from us; and grant that whilst we contend earnestly for the truth the peace of God may rule in our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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Women and the Priesthood.

A REPRINT

OF LEADING ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE
"CHURCH MILITANT," June—September, 1919.

Rev. F. M. Green
**FIRST THINGS FIRST.
THE MIND OF CHRIST.
CATHOLIC CUSTOM.**



First things First.

THE recent decision of the League to challenge the custom which has hitherto prevailed of calling men only to the priesthood has evoked some sharp criticism in quarters where the policy is not so much opposed on the ground of principle as deplored on the ground of expediency. Our critics say to us: You are confronted with an almost boundless opportunity of rallying the progressive elements in the Church in support of social reconstruction. That is the question of the hour. Upon it the thoughts of all thinking men and women are centred. The right, and withal the prompt, solution of the problems it contains is vital to the stability of the whole social fabric. You believe and believe rightly that the ethical principles of Christianity alone can provide a stable foundation for the common life. And yet you are turning aside from these tremendous issues to fritter away time and energy and money on a matter which is utterly trivial by comparison; you are adopting a programme which at best can have no more than a narrow ecclesiastical interest, which will leave utterly unmoved the great mass of men and women who stand outside organised

Christianity yet are turning pathetically to the Church for some guidance in these difficult days; you are advocating a "reform" which if it were accomplished to-morrow would do little or nothing to make the Church a more effective instrument for hastening the coming of the Kingdom.

Such criticism deserves and shall receive an answer.

In the first place we are not abandoning, as our critics suppose, any principle which we have ever asserted or any enterprise to which we have ever put our hands. The resolution which expressed the purpose of the League to take up the question of the priesthood expressed also its adherence to its wider programme. We stand where we have always stood. We affirm the equal worth of all humanity in God's sight and the consequent right of all to equal opportunity for self-development and service, without distinction of race, class, or sex. All that our recent resolution has done is to make explicit what was hitherto implicit and, by so doing, to force those who accepted our principle to face one at least of its logical outcomes. If the question of the priesthood had not been raised in other quarters no doubt the temptation to "let sleeping dogs lie" would have been very great. To err is human, and who will dare to say we should not have erred? But the question of the admission of women to the priesthood was raised for us by the E.C.U. which wished us to declare that we would have nothing to do with it; and, once raised, it could only receive one answer. How could we possibly assert the principle of "no difference" and at the same time refuse to urge its application in the life of the divine society which has given that principle to the world?

As to social reconstruction, our work in that field will only be limited by the resources of time and money which our supporters will place at our disposal; and our work therein will have the inestimable advantage of not being hampered from the outset by bearing the brand of insincerity. Imagine the position of one of the priests who are members of our League addressing an audience on the application of the principle of "no difference" to the industrial life of our time and being challenged by the question "Does the L.C.M. support the admission of women to the priesthood?" That is not of course how it would be done. We recall the open air meetings of the Church Congress at Southampton; the great crowds round the lorries; the good-humoured heckling. Then it was "Votes for women," and the crowd, sympathetic for the most part, was only anxious to establish the thorough-going character of our democratic views. But we can hear in imagination the

voice from the outskirts of some future crowd, in Leicester, shall we say—"Are you willing to let a woman do your job?" and we are thankful that the priest member of our League will be able to answer "Yes." We imagine such an answer will do more to convert the crowd than many arguments.

So far are we from regarding the recent decision of our Council as a turning aside from the attempts to align all the democratic elements in our Church life with all that is essentially Christian in the great democratic movements of our time, that we do not hesitate to assert that without such a decision the attempt would have been doomed to failure from the outset. If the Church or any section of it is to carry any weight in the difficult days which lie ahead, the first requirement is sincerity. The life of the Church does not bear that hall-mark to-day; and the Church in consequence is well nigh impotent. Instead of being a microcosm of the Kingdom of God it exhibits in its own life every feature it is commissioned to overthrow in the life of the world. It flatters the great; it gives privileges to wealth; it sweats its employees, and more especially those women who serve for a pittance in the humblest departments of its ministry. It proclaims the principles of brotherhood from its pulpits and violates them day by day, without concealment and without shame. Its "life laughs through and spits at its creed." We cannot add another to the manifest hypocrisies of Christendom: we cannot go on proclaiming that there is "no difference" and resolving in our secret hearts that we will maintain a difference none the less.

We must leave for consideration on some future occasion the direct practical benefits which will accrue to the Church when the reform we advocate has been achieved. They are not, we are persuaded, of that trivial character our critics would have us suppose. But if the opening of the priesthood to women brought no enrichment to the Church's ministry, did nothing to perfect its practical equipment for the conversion of sinners and the building up of saints, yet by its homage to the central principle of the Catholic faith, as that faith concerns itself with the humanity which the Eternal Word assumed in the Incarnation and redeemed on the Cross, it would do more than anything else of which we know to convince the world that the Church has for mankind a message worthy of regard, a message in which it believes, to which it is ready to yield obedience in the ordering of its own life.

The Mind of Christ.

MANY of the arguments which have been adduced to prove that women should not be admitted to the priesthood are of an obviously superficial character. They state reasons of convenience (of questionable convenience, as we think) not of principle. They might have considerable weight under one set of conditions and none at all under another. But there is at least one argument which is fundamental—the argument which affirms that the admission of women to the priesthood is contrary to the mind of Christ as shown by His own action and by the unbroken custom of the Catholic Church under the guidance of His Holy Spirit for the past nineteen hundred years. If that argument can be made good none other need be advanced; it must be accounted final by all. No women whose feelings we should care to express could dream of appealing from His decision. His will, adorable even if inscrutable, would determine the question for all time.

On the present occasion we must content ourselves with examining the inferences to be drawn from His own example. The facts are not in dispute. He called no woman to serve in the number of the Twelve; no woman was empowered to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice; women were probably present in the Upper Room when the power to remit and retain sins was conferred on the Church as a whole, but there is no shred of evidence to show that this power was ever exercised save through the Apostles or those to whom they committed it by the laying on of hands. Women were part of the priestly body but were not commissioned to exercise the office of the priesthood. Yet—and this is a point which our opponents quite justifiably emphasise and which causes searchings of heart to many whom we hope may become our supporters—there were in our Lord's company many women well fitted by spiritual and intellectual capacity for its exercise. The Rev. Arnold Pinchard and the Rev. A. V. Magee both cite the case of the Blessed Virgin. "He deliberately excluded," writes Mr. Pinchard, "from the government of His Church the one woman who, of all others, would, one imagines, have been best capable of such service had it been at all desirable in the will and wisdom of God that any woman should be called to undertake that responsibility and to do that particular kind of work." "If," says Mr. Magee, as reported elsewhere, "the time was ripe for a woman to be made the mother of God the time was ripe for a woman to be made anything that God willed." "He could so easily," wrote the Rev. R. Acland-Troyte last month in these

pages, "had He wished to do so, have included one or more of His faithful women adherents in the number of those to whom He gave the great commissions 'Whose sins ye remit,' &c. There must have been some of them who were spiritually and intellectually the equals of the Apostles *But He did not.*"

Now this reasoning would, we imagine, be conclusive against the contention that the reason why our Lord did not Himself call women to the priesthood was that there were then no women fit for its exercise, if the demand for women priests to-day rested upon the supposed superiority of the women of the twentieth century to the women of the first. But no such contention is advanced. We could suggest many reasons why our Lord might have desired that in the first ages of Christianity the priesthood should be exercised only by men—the prejudices of the ancient world, the subordinate position of women in ancient life, the prevailing licentiousness of the age, the misconceptions which would have certainly been provoked in the heathen world in which in many cases the rites of religion were disfigured by the grossest immorality. But we should never suggest that it was because there were no women fit, after the standard of human fitness, to be called to the priesthood. Mr. Magee's statement is rhetorically effective. Submitted to cold analysis it is a patent absurdity save for one who maintains that when all things were ready for the Incarnation the world had already reached the goal of its moral, social, and religious development.

We ask our readers to admit that, for many reasons which we think we can discern and doubtless for many others which are hidden from us, it is possible that Christ may have desired that for a time the priesthood of His Church should be exercised only by men and that women should only be called to its exercise when the world was ready for that development, when a new era of sex relationships should have dawned. We ask that the possibility of this may be recognised; and then, assuming for the sake of argument the possibility to be a fact, we put the question: "What should we expect Christ to have done under such circumstances?" Should we expect Him to have called certain women to the priesthood Himself as a proof of their fitness for its exercise, and then to have announced to His Apostles that His example in this matter was not to be followed for a space of nineteen centuries? The suggestion would be preposterous. A moment's reflection shows that we should expect Him to have done precisely what He did. We should expect Him (1) to have refrained from calling any woman to the priesthood; (2) to have refrained from any utterance which would have excluded women from the priesthood; (3) to have adopted a general attitude towards men and women alike which ignored all distinctions of sex; which would, as it bore

fruit in the hearts and lives of His disciples, transform all that was amiss in sex relationships and lead them to perceive that in Him, in relation to Him as the spiritual head of redeemed humanity, in His body which is the Church, there is neither male nor female. If the facts fit the hypothesis so well is it unreasonable to suggest that the hypothesis is true?

An argument from silence is always dangerous; but it is surely legitimate to meet an argument which bases itself upon something which Christ did not do by an argument which emphasises something which Christ did not say. Christ never said one word to confine the priesthood of His Church to men; He never said one word to suggest that either sex was a qualification for any ministry or duty in the kingdom of God; sex is simply something that does not matter so far as life in its higher aspects is concerned. If the Divine Head of the Church had deemed it essential that priestly authority and priestly service should be exercised through men only why, did He not say so?

We hope to examine the argument that concerns itself with the custom of the Catholic Church next month. For the moment we are content to assert that it is impossible to claim the action, or, as it rather is, the inaction of Christ as constituting in itself any barrier to the admission of women to the priesthood.

Catholic Custom.

A REMARKABLE leading article was published in *The Church Times* immediately after the Debate at the Church House on the question of the admission of women to the priesthood. It dismissed as wholly inconclusive a large part of the argument advanced to prove that women should not be called to serve the Church in such a capacity and based its own antagonism to the reform which we advocate on the ground of Catholic custom alone. The argument ran thus: The undivided Church with absolute unanimity established the custom of confining the priesthood to men. Such a custom cannot be changed by gradual and tolerated innovation, for ordination is an official act which must always from its very nature express the deliberate approval of the Church. If there is to be change at all with regard to such a custom it must be change deliberately sanctioned by competent authority. The only authority competent to sanction such a change is the whole Catholic Church. Therefore till Christendom is reunited there can be no question of admitting women to the priesthood. This argument is set forth as fundamental.

We have no wish to quarrel about words, but if this is the only "fundamental" argument against a women priesthood then there is no fundamental argument at all. A fundamental argument would determine the matter for all time, not only as things are but also as they possibly may become. A natural incapacity on the part of women for priestly functions would provide such an argument. So also would some unmistakable direction from our Lord excluding women from the priesthood. But that cannot be a fundamental argument which though, suppose, it operates conclusively to-day may quite well cease to operate to-morrow.

In point of fact many for whom we write would probably find themselves in agreement with the main contention of *The Church Times* that the admission of women to the priesthood can only be brought about by the action of Christendom as a whole; and if it were explicitly affirmed by our own branch of the Church that its reason for refusing its priesthood to women was respect for Catholic custom the whole controversy would be freed from the bitterness which threatens to attend it. Certainly in that case we who advocate the change would feel entitled to claim not only tolerance but sympathy from our fellow Anglicans. If, as we believe, as *The Church Times* implicitly admits to be possible, the admission of women to the priesthood would in itself be a desirable thing, we are doing no bad service to the cause of unity by making it plain that the divisions of Christendom alone stand in the way of the accomplishment of the reform which we advocate.

We are not, however, prepared to accept without discussion the position that the Anglican branch of the Church must postpone reform in this matter until it can be brought about by the action of a reunited Christendom. We do not attempt to elucidate the whole question of authority in the Church; but there are two points which we wish clearly to put:—

1. The Anglican Church, or rather the Church in England, has already in the past definitely broken with Catholic custom in the exercise of the authority which it claimed to possess. In the sixteenth century it permitted its priests to marry. The writer in *The Church Times* in the article to which we refer alludes to this fact, but dismisses it as irrelevant on the ground that there were in the past and in the Eastern Church at that date varying usages with regard to the celibacy of the clergy. That is true. But it is equally true that the Church in England permitted in the sixteenth century what the Church of Christ had definitely forbidden at least from the close of the second century and quite possibly from apostolic days. It allowed its priests to marry. In early days a married priesthood was

common, perhaps the rule; that is to say, married men were called to the priesthood. The Pastoral Epistles clearly contemplate such a condition of things. It is so in the East to-day. If the Church in England in the sixteenth century had simply permitted the ordination of men already married and the use of marriage subsequent to ordination it could have pleaded that though departing from its own past rule and from the rule of Western Christendom it was but reverting to the custom of an earlier age. What it did was to allow men who had been already admitted to the priesthood to contract marriage, a thing with doubtful precedent in any age and definitely forbidden by the unvarying and formulated usage both of East and West for well over a thousand years, a usage which outside the Anglican communion is universally maintained to this day. If the Church of England did wrong in the sixteenth century the clergy of the Church, if we may judge from their conduct, have been slow to discern the fault. If the Church of England did right it is hard to see what theory of Church authority could consistently forbid the Anglican communion to admit women to its priesthood.

2. Belief in the Holy Ghost is part of the faith of the Church. Suppose that throughout the Anglican communion a growing conviction spread that women should by the will of God be called to the ministerial priesthood. Suppose that all meditation upon the life of our Lord led to an ever clearer perception of the equal worth of all humanity in His sight and that it was felt that the maintenance of artificial sex distinctions was a practical denial of the truth He had proclaimed to the world. Suppose that the need of the Church for this ministry on the part of women became clearer every day; that prejudice against it steadily died away from amongst us; that women of high character and ability felt moved to prepare themselves by study and prayer and definitely affirmed that they felt called to its exercise. Should we or should we not recognise in all this the operation of the Holy Spirit? And, if we felt that the Holy Spirit was indeed leading the Church towards such a goal, is there any tenable view of Church authority which would permit, nay require, the whole Anglican communion to declare: "We know and are persuaded that it is the will of God that women should serve in the priesthood, but until the schisms of past centuries have been healed, till East and West are once more united, and Rome has recognised the validity of our Orders we must continue as we are, withholding from the world our witness to the truth, hiding our light under a bushel, and counting external conformity with Catholic custom something which not even the Spirit of God Himself could authorise us to disregard"?

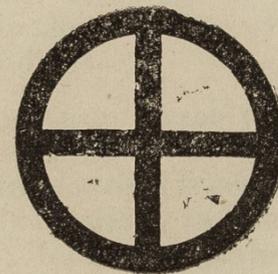
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WOMEN AND THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

By H. T. Jacka



The LEAGUE of the CHURCH MILITANT
6, York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C.2.

Women and the Christian Ministry.

I.

THE claim for the admission of women to all the ministries of the Church is, on the face of it, revolutionary, though, like most other revolutionary ideas, it may be a true child of ideas which have gone before it. As an idea, it must obviously be examined on its own merits as well as in relation to circumstances. It may be of some service to attempt to clear the ground by summing up the questions which arise in the discussion under a few main headings.

The first great question is the plain question of historical fact: Has the full ministry of the Church ever been exercised by women? and the answer to it is certainly a negative. For the period for which nearly all things in Church history are uncertain, this also is uncertain; for all the periods of which we have sure record there is no doubt about it at all. There were ministries which were exercised by women, but there is no reason for believing that they ever exercised all the ministries on an equal footing with men. The claim that the primitive deaconess was really the feminine deacon only emphasises the fact that we know of no feminine of the primitive priest.

The few occasions in the history of the Church when ministries in heretical sects were exercised by women are all of a fairly definite single type. The full equality of the sexes was always associated with movements claiming a peculiar richness in outward manifestations of the Spirit, with the exaltation of the spirit at the expense of the form and outward order, and with the subordination of the minister to the prophet. This was a natural consequence of extreme emphasis on the spiritual, since the gifts of the Spirit were obviously given without regard to sex. It was made one of the chief grounds of attack upon

the Montanists in the second century as upon the early Methodists in the eighteenth. Whatever its significance may be, it clearly cannot be made a ground for claiming the official ministry of the Catholic Church, which has always, rightly or wrongly, held aloof from such movements. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that every Christian ministry except the actual administration of the sacraments, has been exercised by women; even in the government of the Church early abbesses with such authority as St. Hilda seem to have taken some part. Women have from the first taken their share in missionary work and in the service of intercession, and often in teaching, and sex distinctions have always disappeared upon the farther plane of ecstasy and of prophecy in the more limited sense of the word.

So we are brought to the second great question which arises in connection with the subject: Why is it that the Church has never given the full ministry to women? The question has been asked from the beginning and it has received answers which may be set out as two answers. The first is not really an assertion of principle at all but a statement of expediency: the official ministry of women has never been sanctioned because it is not in harmony with the social institutions around it, it would be a scandal; the women of the Church must not be allowed to do anything shocking or unseemly. It is easy to see the manifestations of this spirit in the Pastoral Epistles. The second has taken innumerable forms, but in the First Epistle to Timothy we find it concisely explained: "Adam was not beguiled but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression: but she shall be saved through the child-bearing if they continue in faith and love." A woman must always be in subjection, because the sin of Eve brought sin and death upon all mankind; the outward sign of her sin was the great pain and peril of childbirth. This is the traditional ecclesiastical form of the belief that there is a fundamental difference between men and women and that government belongs by nature to the man. The belief itself has its roots in primitive physical life, far deeper than faith in the sin of Eve, and civilisation is only beginning to influence it.

Thus the second question transforms itself into the third, which is in a sense the whole problem: What is the opinion of the Church about the equality of man and woman? It is generally admitted that the effect of Christian ethics has been decidedly to improve the status of women; it may be questioned whether this has not at times been true in spite of the influence of the visible Church. The influence upon human progress of

Christianity and of the Christian Church is a peculiarly tangled bit of the history of ideas not yet by any means unravelled. Generally speaking, the Church accepted a compromise with social institutions not, in the view of contemporary Christians, flagrantly wrong, such as slavery, while maintaining uninjured a principle which must ultimately destroy them. The advantage of this attitude may have outweighed its disadvantages; at any rate it has been consistently adopted by the main body of the Church down to the present time. The assertion of the absolute spiritual equality of all men and women was a revolutionary doctrine lying at the heart of Christianity, and at the beginning finding expression in revolutionary action, for such the admission of women to the full fellowship and sacraments of the Church must have been, but the attempt to put this principle into full and complete expression was tainted from the first by social compromises which increased in importance as the young Church grew older. Thus the outward regulation of the Church represented, not the ultimate principle which always lay within its teaching, but the forms in which that principle was naturally clothed by the minds of its members, who were very seldom and transiently emancipated from all the innumerable half-conscious assumptions which governed their accustomed social order. The barbarism of the centuries succeeding the fall of the Roman Empire brought into the Church a vast population with a heavy bias against any conception of sex equality, but the question was virtually settled already. As the political and moral system of the Church hardened into shape, two factors in particular seem to have influenced it in this respect. The stress which was increasingly laid upon the sanctity of virginity tended, in a society in which all such questions were regarded mainly from the man's point of view, to lower the whole dignity of women, and we know that many of the most honoured saints of the Middle Ages regarded women simply as agents of temptation. The respect which came to be paid to the canonical Scriptures involved a naive acceptance of the Old Testament heroes and their sex relationships and principles which did much to mould the opinion of the Church about women for fifteen hundred years. The influence of both these causes can be traced in almost every mediæval statement as to the duties of women, and the authority of the second of them was certainly not diminished by the Reformation.

Yet all the time the increasingly Christian basis of morality and the Church's own penitential system were steadily implanting in the consciousness of Christendom the fact that women and

men alike were individually responsible for their own lives. For the first time in history the moral principle became a general assumption that the moral and spiritual life of women had an absolute, not a relative, existence; that the quality of goodness in a woman had no dependence upon any man.

It cannot be too clearly stated that the question of the admission of women, sooner or later, to the ministries of the Church depends entirely upon the Christian view of the equality of men and women. One question contains the other. It is obvious that on the bare appeal to precedent, the verdict is entirely against the revolutionary view, as it might have been expected to be; it remains to be seen whether history has anything more valuable to teach us on this subject than the collection of external traditions can ever be.

II.

THE question of admitting women to the Christian ministry is not a new one; the principal arguments against it were formulated centuries ago and on the superficial appeal to precedent there can be little doubt of the verdict. Those who discount to a certain extent the mere appeal to precedent must provide for it a reasonable and satisfactory substitute, and this article aims at suggesting the direction in which such a substitute may be found. At the same time, it will be recognised that the claim, which is old, takes on at the present day a new guise and can be analysed with different results from those of any earlier age. For the first time the claim now made is in keeping with the general drift of human progress; is at the very least not antagonistic to the conscious opinion of the typical progressive mind. Here, indeed, for the first time does modern thought make a direct attack on a part of the actual organisation of the Church itself; and the situation itself must be understood before discussion can be anything but purely quarrelsome.

Among all the great changes by which the intellectual world of the early twentieth century is separated from that of the early nineteenth, probably none will prove to be of greater significance than the general recognition of the principle of progress in matters of morality, and none will have a more direct effect upon the Christian Church. It is now accepted without question that as a matter of fact standards of conduct among different centuries, different types of culture and different social systems are very various, and that wherever we can trace a people in

other ways progressive for any considerable length of time we see also a progress from a lower to a higher standard of conduct. The use of such terms as "lower" and "higher" of course implies the acceptance of some absolute standard; in England there has been a general tendency to accept the ethical teaching of the Gospels, if not as an absolute standard, at least as an unachieved ideal, and this in part conceals from us the magnitude of the change in the point of view.

It is hardly necessary to labour the point that the Christian Church like all other living societies has changed and developed its moral standard with the passing of the centuries. The best thought of the twentieth century, outside as well as inside the Church, is a long way in advance of the Church which set up the Inquisition. The teaching of some of the Fathers about rewards and punishments seems to many Christians of to-day singularly un-Christian. It is not primarily upon critical but upon moral grounds that the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament and the notion of an avenging and angry omnipotent God have become unacceptable. Unless Christianity is to be nothing more than a personal experience or a code of private conduct, the modern Church must find out how to interpret itself in terms which include the new truth.

In practice, of course, this fact of change has always been admitted. Institutions which were an integral part of the Church's life at one time have ceased to be so at another: new features have appeared, old features have disappeared, the balance of those more permanent has varied from time to time. The office of deaconess disappeared; the title of exorcist lived on when most of his characteristic functions had gone; the position of the priest was different in the fourth century and in the twelfth. Changes were sometimes introduced by definite legislative action, sometimes by the half-conscious movement of custom, but they have continually taken place. The core of life has never altered, but it has clothed itself in differing bodies from age to age with the growth which is always one of the best tests of life; and the moment of greatest peril to the Church is that in which intellectual indolence or an over-great sense of veneration leads a later to accept mechanically the garments which fitted an earlier time.

The Church of England at the present time is suffering from this evil with peculiar acuteness. For over three hundred years her natural growth and change has been cramped and

distorted, though not absolutely arrested, by limits rigidly marked out for her in written law. The English state in the same period has changed beyond recognition. One of the Church's most pressing needs is the devisal of means by which the natural process of growth and change may embody itself; another is a touchstone by which true growth may be distinguished from mere novelty and its full recognition secured.

In modern society, self-conscious and watching its own development, one of the principal problems has come to be the means of deciding when and how change is necessary and right. In the Christian church the difficulty should be far less and the solution which society at large will ultimately work out may be implicit; for at the heart of Christianity lies the conception of the supreme value of the individual soul, for which society exists and through which it draws all its spiritual life. That which is hurtful to the true growth of the spirit can never be a true expression of the Christian idea; artificial inequalities and limitations are only a part of the fortification from which the mechanical and the material distract and thwart the movement of life.

At the very heart of Christianity lies the conception of the equality of all human individuals. From an origin which is in itself essentially a part of the Christian view of life have come modern democracy and the woman's movement. Both, above the minor things which have gathered around them, speak pre-eminently for the supreme sanctity of life. The Church, holding within her still the truth from which they have sprung, tries to express it in a body of the almost-forgotten past. The equality of men and women, an idea rooted in the Christian faith, one of the greatest gifts given by that faith to the modern world, now finds only a confused, half-hearted and unofficial recognition among Christian people: no recognition at all in the visible body of the Catholic Church. In the question of the admission of women to Holy Orders, the Church has its test case.

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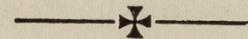
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WOMEN PRIESTS.

BY

A. A.



WOMEN PRIESTS.

“ Women Priests ”—What a preposterous idea !
But *why* so preposterous ?

There is no action in life, other than that of paternity, which is not potentially that of a woman: just as there is no action in life, excepting that of maternity, which is impossible to men. Certainly there are things which men do far better than women, just as there are things that women do far better than men, but this implies choice and suitability, rather than condescension and exclusion in either case. This war has evidenced the undreamt of possibilities of feminine achievement in the most unexpected quarters. Given the necessary physique (possessed by some women), together with such education, experience, and traditions as a man would enjoy, and a woman could even be an Admiral of the Fleet, or a Brigadier General, as witness the women of history from Deborah down to Joan of Arc. Just as, given the necessary patience (possessed by some men), sublime self-sacrifice in details, pure untiring love, and the feminine traditions of self-effacing domesticity, and a man might even fulfil satisfactorily the complex duties of the mistress of a poor and anxious home.

Undoubtedly there are spheres in which men excel, as there are spheres in which a woman excels. But, the point is, motherhood and fatherhood are the only actions which are absolutely and positively exclusive to either sex. Many people are quite unable to see any really valid objection, whether theological, biological, historical, or sociological, to the admission of *suitable* women to the Catholic priesthood. Of course, as in every new departure, special care would be necessary as to the mental, moral, physical, and spiritual qualifications of any woman candidate for the priesthood; the more searching the tests the better, for our women priests must be of the very best type; nothing less will do. (This special care in the choice of suit-

able women might lead to a corresponding and most necessary increase of care in the selection of men candidates also.)

What are a priest's duties? Primarily and chiefly the administration of the Sacraments.

Of the two great Sacraments, *one* can already be administered validly by women, therefore sex is obviously not an essential barrier to the administration of a Sacrament. This is noteworthy.

The Blessed Sacrament of the Altar can only be celebrated by a priest. What is there to prevent a suitable laywoman from adding to her real qualifications the authority for this action, which she would receive in taking Holy Orders? There is no obstacle placed in the way of a suitable layman.

We are very fond of those Christmas cards which call the Altar "another Bethlehem," and it is, of course, as the result of the Incarnation that the Blessed Sacrament is our privilege and our possession.

Of the two Events, which is the greater? The original action, the Incarnation, which altered the whole course of the world's development, or its resultant, the Blessed Sacrament, which carries on and applies for all time the saving grace of the Incarnation?

Certainly we cannot minimise the importance of the Incarnation.

Who was the human agent there? A woman. Who was—shall we say—the Celebrant? A woman. Whose was the human voice, the human will, which made of Bethlehem the first "House of Bread"? Not the voice and will of a man, but of a woman. "Born of a woman." She bore about the sacred Body and Blood of Christ, not in a gold or jewelled pyx, but in the shrine of her own body; she guarded It, not in a tabernacle made with hands, but in the temple of her own flesh and blood. She lifted up holy hands at the Consecration of humanity at that first altar—

she lifted up a holy voice in the *words* which were the seal of that Consecration—she was, by her suitability, the medium of the origin of *all* Sacraments.

No *man* was chosen to be the medium of the Divine Will. This of course may be explained as being due to biological necessity; yet the *fact* remains, with all it involves of the essential suitability of a woman to the very highest spiritual function, when that function needs her co-operation. If there had been unsuitability the Divine Omnipotence would have found some other means.

It is quite true that our Blessed Lord, in taking upon Him our common humanity, took the form of a man, and not of a woman. Yet, does this argue any superiority of mankind over womankind? Taken in conjunction with the humility of our Lord, who took the lowest place in life, took upon Him the form of a servant, died the death of a slave and a malefactor, and who *never* claimed the highest place, but performed the lowliest offices, it might on the contrary even be regarded as the most intense condescension possible.

But there is no need to press this point. One would rather feel, with the deepest reverence, that human nature in its entirety was honoured by the Divine condescension: womanhood in becoming the Mother of God, and manhood in becoming the vehicle of the union of the two natures, Divine and human, both manhood and womanhood realizing their perfection in the Incarnation; one by means of the special virtues of womanhood and the other by means of the special virtues of manhood; so that human nature in its entirety was permitted to fulfil the Divine will in the Incarnation.

"In the Image of God created He him: male and female created He them." Birth, life, creative power—we only see on earth a dim reflection of these tremendous functions. Humanity itself contains in its male and female components an

image of Divinity. Some inscrutable and indescribable life-giving correlative must exist in the Divine nature, or we should not be expressly told that the "Image of God" included both male and female. This is a great mystery. Do we respect the *completeness* of this marvellous correlative of Divinity as we should do—or do we cripple any of its activities? Do we give to *full* humanity that power of expression which—as at least an *image* of God—should be its solemn prerogative? or do we limit unrestricted expression to one section alone of that humanity which in its completeness—and in its completeness only—is an Image of God?

Can we estimate the far-reaching results of such a limitation, or realize the tremendous responsibility involved therein?

Religious people who claim an essential superiority for man, are apt to quote in argument that the fall of humanity originated in a woman, and to consider the subsequent curse as an assertion of her inferiority.

Probably the allegorical "apple" was the realization of sex; this came first to Eve, in some way, by suggestion—diabolical suggestion according to Bible history—and with this realization came the knowledge of good and evil in sex life. The "apple" could scarcely have been anything else, as at that stage no other social sin was possible. The animals have no such knowledge. Adam and Eve, having passed through an evolutionary crisis, and having become rational creatures, possessing the power of choice and free will, could not evade such knowledge, which came first to Eve by some intuitive process permitted by Almighty God and effected by Satan. The realization of sex was then unavoidably conveyed to Adam by propinquity, with the recorded result. In some way the possession of knowledge resulted in wrong choice, with the ethical consequence of a warped human will, and the physical consequence of

much suffering in the flesh for both sexes. But there is, in the Bible narrative, even at the beginning, no statement of masculine superiority of a spiritual or ethical character—there was to be a sexual domination, unspeakable in its awful consequences of tyranny, torture, and horror in the lives of women, but even so, of a limited character—limited both individually, "thy desire shall be to thy husband," and also chronologically—till the "seed of the woman" should bruise the serpent's head. Human nature, both male and female, had to work out its own freedom and salvation, aided by Divine Grace. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The Incarnation was to remove the curse upon humanity incurred by the Fall, *including* the curse of the domination of sex, which was, in principle, removed once and for all by Christ, even though it has taken subsequent centuries of progress to apply His teaching practically, and to effect the still most incomplete working out of His principle of equality.

And, to the Catholic, even if Eve's rebellion and self indulgence brought sin, does not Mary's conformity and obedience, sweet chastity and austere purity, bring hope? Does the vice count for everything, and the virtues for nothing? Is there only condemnation for women through Eve, and no release through Mary's Divine Son?

And, has suffering no expiatory power? For women in general as well as for any individual?

Again, we would ask, are there no *men* inadequate to the duties of their Holy Office? Inadequate morally, mentally, physically, spiritually?

As, thank God, there arise before us the images of innumerable saints, holy, Christlike men, true priests of God, and true lovers of humanity, does there not also arise the recollection of awful caricatures of the priesthood—immoral, stupid, lazy, self-indulgent, or tyrannical men—hirelings not shepherds; yet calling themselves priests of God; surely

this is so, and to some of us, who in the days of our ignorance looked upon a priest by virtue of his office as being necessarily as near perfection as a human being can be, the knowledge of these inconsistencies comes with a great shock, and increases the desire for women priests—because the *raison d'être* of exclusiveness no longer exists. It is obvious that manhood is *not* the perfect vehicle for priesthood, then why exclude women, on the score of real or imaginary shortcomings, which are a common human failing, and are not confined exclusively to either sex? Does sex—either sex—argue perfection? Does sex—either sex—preclude the potential perfection commanded by God to all humanity? Holiness, intellectuality, morality, practical ability, these are not the monopoly of either sex, therefore there is no essential superior qualification in one, any more than in the other.

Other duties of the priesthood, second only to that of administering the Sacraments, are visiting the sick, parochial organisation, teaching the ignorant, interceding for the wilful, comforting the sorrowful, preaching to the congregation, etc. Are not women—the right women—quite equal to men—the right men—in these respects? Then, the administration of Holy Unction, the joining of men and women in Holy Matrimony, what is there in womanhood to prevent the proper performance of these duties? Confirmation and Holy Orders would be equally well administered by a woman bishop as by a man bishop. If the priesthood and the episcopate are essentially unsuitable for women, why have women in the past had the insignia of the episcopate—the crozier and mitre—bestowed upon them?

As to absolution in auricular confession (and this is specially noteworthy), how many modest and reserved women would feel like prisoners set free, by the sudden release from the necessity (if they would have sacramental absolution) of unburdening their hearts and consciences before any man, even a priest? Would a man like to take all his sins and troubles to

a woman priest—would he feel sure of comprehension, and true sympathy, and really helpful advice—would not also the proper reserve of sex trouble him—then think how all this is intensified in the relation of woman to man. Again, how many unbalanced women would be the *better* for taking their sins and troubles to a woman instead of to a man, and what a relief this would be to many earnest priests now-a-days, who realize the burden and the difficulty of dealing with such cases, and would gladly hand them over to a duly qualified woman.

Some women would of course prefer the old way; prejudice dies hard; that would be a matter of individual choice, but to many the relief would be untold.

To the thinker, blessed with any real historical sense, St. Paul's much quoted dictum is—as regards the *details* of its expression, a negligible quantity. It is surely ludicrous to attempt to apply, arbitrarily and irrevocably, the social etiquette and sumptuary laws of any one place and period to the requirements of every other place and period. St. Paul himself, accepted and quoted as he is by so many as the apostle of a static sociology, would probably have regarded the Mosaic etiquette as being somewhat obsolete. But, if we can realize that what St. Paul aimed at was the definite application of the underlying and essential principle of seamliness and suitability, and respect for existing social laws and conventions, then his teaching—apart from the transitory conditions of its local and temporary application—becomes a good starting point for that true social reform which is based on the development rather than the destruction of correct principles already in existence: principles of an abiding character, and capable of universal and progressive application.

Thus St. Paul's teaching has its true value for all times and under all conditions.

One is often grieved by the unbalanced sentiment, approaching idolatry, which makes many women hover in an undignified fashion round some special priest; it is a matter for great regret, and has often been the cause of scornful and amused comment. Yet even this want of balance, this silly idolatry, is expressed in a better and more wholesome way than the masculine counterpart; as witnessed by the unbalanced male sentiment which makes idols of stage favourites: the one aims at self-indulgence, open and unashamed—the other has at least some germ of that right feeling which makes us love the highest when we see it, or *think* we see it. It is better to hover round the Church door than to hover round the stage door.

We are often told that the best women do not desire the priesthood—indeed, that the very idea is abhorrent to them. This may be so with some, but is it so with all? Assuredly it is not; it is the heart's desire of many devout women. And how wonderful will be the moment to the first woman priest, when she enters into her long-deferred heritage, and as she performs the central act of Catholic worship cries out—in the spirit—in a burst of rapture and an ecstasy of love—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

We are also told that holy women in the past never desired this privilege; such women as St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa of Spain, Mother Juliana of Norwich, Hilda of Whitby, Mdme. de Chantal, Angelique Arnaud, Mdme. de Guyon; and, in more recent times, Florence Nightingale, Josephine Butler and others. This is, quite possibly, true, but are there not definite crises in psychic evolution, for individuals as well as in the aggregate, when there is a sudden realization of possibilities hitherto unimagined! And again, how can *we* tell what silent cravings filled the hearts of those loving women, as they did *all* for the Altar *excepting* the central act! Amongst the writer's own most vivid personal experiences may be reckoned the

ardent and overpowering longing, when preparing the Altar for Celebrations, to be a man, *just* to be able to celebrate the Divine Mysteries; it seemed so hard to be shut out from that greatest of earthly privileges; but so hedged round are we by convention and habit that the possibility of women priests never, at that time, even dawned upon the mind. Many women walk through life in blinkered semi-blindness, seeing the goal, looking faithfully ahead, drawing or bearing their heavy burdens, but knowing nothing, seeing nothing, of the great possibilities of life on either side of the blinkers of habit and convention. Suddenly these may be removed, and the full wonder of the world, the material world and the spiritual world, breaks upon their startled vision, and the cry is, "Oh! *what* I have missed all my life, let me help others not to miss it all." So does the Chinese woman unprotestingly submit to the torture and deformity of the bandaged foot; so does the Turkish woman endure the insulting veil; till the illuminating moment comes when bandage and veil are cast aside once and for ever. So also it is in the moral and spiritual life of women. We claim our fullest and highest privileges, and we claim emancipation into a more complete usefulness. We do not claim notoriety, as has been said in cruel and uncomprehending criticism, but we aim at freedom, freedom to exercise our highest faculties and to enjoy our highest privileges. Lengthened suffering, involved and often obscure processes, are usually the preliminaries of emancipation; but the actual throwing off of the shackles often comes with startling suddenness, as events, both remote and recent, witness.

This baffled longing for usefulness may result in the diversion of helpful forces into the wrong channel. The prophetic instinct cannot be stifled, the cry of the soul cannot be stilled. Want of sympathy in the Church may drive women as it did John Wesley and his followers into nonconformity with the Church's rules, and the result, the deplorable result, may be the

formation of another schism, officered and administered by women—women of mental and spiritual ability, who feel that they have their message to deliver. The Free Churches recognise this, the Catholic Church either will not or cannot recognise the existence within it of such an important factor in modern life: but remains the chief stronghold of sexual inequality, domination and exclusiveness.

Physically, the priesthood would occasion no greater strain than that incurred by many other occupations successfully discharged by women. And those especial finer qualities of women, which chivalrous men applaud and admire and protect, just as women foster in men *their* special virtues, would those suffer—or would not they rather find their fullest development and usefulness in the exercise of the most delicate functions and duties of the priesthood? Insight, spirituality, sympathy, intuition, refinement, love of order and beauty, patience, gentleness, and the like.

As to the question of celibacy, while a true vocation to celibacy would probably make for a greater *efficiency* in many respects in women priests as it does in men priests—(when it *is* genuine, and carried out faithfully in the spirit as well as in the letter by those who are able to accept it fully, not making it a cloak for libertinage)—yet the sacrament of marriage, and holy motherhood, should be no barriers in the Catholic Church, any more than marriage and fatherhood are barriers against men in the Catholic Church—if we except the disciplinary accretions of the Roman branch.

It is said that if our Blessed Lord had regarded women as suitable for the priesthood and episcopate, He would have given His commission to women apostles. But He was patient with all the limitations of His period and country, and at that time the status of women would have made their apostleship a practical impossibility. But *all* His actions pointed to the

equality of women, though He did not expect from the world at large an acceptance of such a radical and sudden social change. The unsuitability is at any rate purely hypothetical, never having been tested or given a trial. A mere theory is no proof, and cannot be reckoned as such.

History, sacred and profane, proves indisputably the ability of women to govern, to teach, to lead; and that in spite of the limitations to which they have always been condemned. Recent occurrences have shewn even more than this, they have proved that women can do things hitherto undreamt of: then why should intellectual, social, professional doors be opened to them, and spiritual doors closed? Dignity rightly conferred makes the recipient dignified; shall we then, in the interests of the human race, limit the dignity of womanhood?

Rather let us face this question with an open mind, and in the light of history in its broadest sense. Let us realize the significance of events and of developments. Do not let us say that because a thing has never been yet, that therefore it never can be: we ought, at this stage of the world's history, to have learnt the futility of that line of argument.

Let us not be blinded by habit and convention, shutting our eyes to the reforming potentialities of life; in our pride, prejudice and the narrower sacerdotalism turning deaf ears to the appeal of humanity, and becoming unjust judges; killing, limiting, crucifying spiritual forces, and thus adding another false judgment to those recorded in the world's history; from the Great Injustice and the Great Crucifixion down through myriads and myriads of lesser ones.

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways.”

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