

24 JAN 1919

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Royden 1919.
45 Bow Lane, E. 14.

23.1.19.

Dear Miss Corben,

The C. S. W. S. ought to be really "militant", ought it not? if it takes such a terrific title? It seems strange to me, who fought against militancy years ago, when it took the form of physical violence, to have to urge on the League now to a more energetic spiritual warfare! But do forgive my trespasses & consider:-

(1) The League persistently shirks the one really burning question with regard to women & the Church - i.e. the question of the priesthood. If it can't shake up its mind on the vital point, what sort of a lead can it give?

(2) It arranges a service to commemorate the winning of the vote, & asks a man to preach the sermon! In doing this, the League not only does not lead but actually lags behind public opinion & the most advanced Church opinion.

Mr. Hudson Shaw would certainly let you have S. Botolph's, & a woman is actually preaching there on Feb. 6th (as well as on every Thursday this year).

I feel sure Mr. Roberts would have let you ask a woman to preach at S. George's, if she preached in the nave. (I should have thought that Mr. Sheppard would go as far as this too, but I suppose you have asked & been refused?)

Now how can one feel enthusiastic about such a timid League as this? The question of women in orders is the most immediate controversial question; that of women preaching, the most urgent practical one. The League is apparently afraid of both.

Mr. Hudson Shaw has acted & no prohibition has been issued by the Bishop, nor has there been the smallest attempt at protest or disturbance. He is now arraying an entire year's programme of Thursday midday addresses by women. The congregations at the first three were excellent, & I feel sure the experiment will be a great success.

What is the Church League

doing? So far as I can discover it does not help at all, but on the contrary chooses so conspicuous an occasion as the ^{re-} anniversary of the passing of the Franchise Act, to set its seal on the assumption that only a man can preach!

Do believe that I am not speaking from a personal point of view; but I have long chafed at the appearance of being the sole representative of Christian Feminism who either wants to preach or can preach. As long as I was at the City Temple only, it was difficult, as the C.T. is large & its Committee shy of asking a woman if I didn't feel pretty sure could fill it. Mr. Hudson Shaw's courage & spirit gave

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Exactly the opening we wanted, & people will soon realize that there are more & better preachers than among women than myself. The whole question will cease to be a one-man (or one-woman!) affair, & we shall go forward.

But why wasn't it the Church League's business to be first?

Yours sincerely,

A. Maude Royden.