

Report of a Quiet Day & Conference

[April 12, 1917]

held at S. Saviours' Church

& 92 S. George's Square, S.W.

AL/2009

A quiet day & conference was arranged (~~see~~ above) by Mrs Roberts to consider the position of woman & the Church. For particulars see detailed syllabus & programme. There were present. — ? all the names.

Miss A. M. Royden conducted the quiet day

Notes of Addresses.

1st Address.

Miss Royden said that in approaching such a subject it was most important to have the right attitude of mind. We should examine ourselves to see how far our desires were due to personal ambition. Cardinal Newman once said that we should learn from those who criticize & oppose us & see how far they were true in their criticisms. We must see if there was any degree of self-seeking, & differentiate between the desire to serve & the happiness that comes from serving, as it was always a joy to exercise any gift. A greater difficulty arose with regards to the means used, rather than with the end in itself. It was difficult not to be in too great a hurry & not to present opposition. In any step forward much good had been lost because the spirit of those seeking became acrimonious & contentious on account of the opposition. The end must be an unselfish one & the means must also be unselfish. It would be well if in future all discussion & action should be preceded by a quiet day. We should ask God to raise us up above all ^{personal} feelings of anger. The opposition was based — so far as it was good — on a great reverence

for the past, which was the inheritance of every churchman & churchwoman. A man could not become a heretic without great agony. (Reference here made to breakfast reading)
 We should strive to hold fast to our own beliefs without censoring the opinions of others who differ from us. Truth is progressive & dynamic but could not grow without its roots in the past.

The greatest men have had great reverence for human nature. Shakespeare had it & it is this that made him the poet for all ages. The use he made of fairy-tales, superstitions & folk lore was not merely artistic but humane. If a story belonged to the people, if it was the epic of the simple & the humble it had a character quite unlike a story just invented. It held more truth. A thing that had been believed by everyone for a long time had a force that could not be ignored e.g. the fact that the doctrine of the Incarnation appeared in other religions added to its truth. It did not disprove it as was thought in the past. That was orthodox that had been believed by the Catholic Church for always. This must not be forgotten or we should become heretical & schismatic in spirit even if not in action.

Our opponents were overstressing the point of belief in the past & we progressives were in danger of ^{under}stressing or forgetting it. In a certain sense every man stood between us & God, because every man interpreted God to us. This was true of the past as of the present. "When two or three are gathered together in my name" ^{was} not limited to gathering together in place, but in history we always learnt of God from our brother.

This belief in the power of tradition was often used as a battering ram against any progressive thought. Separation was a horrible thing. One sometimes felt as if one would rather be wrong with fellow Christians than right by oneself. We prejudiced the thing we sought & spoiled the good by allowing ourselves to become cut off from the main structural stream of the life of the church. In almost every progressive movement

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There is great danger of a kind of pharisaism & prigishness. One very keen feminist used to say each morning that she might not be a prig before nightfall. There is danger in thinking that "we are the men & wisdom shall die with us." We must try to carry out these revolutionary changes in the church without prigishness. It was easier now than it would be later to get the best spirit in which to work. Such a revolution as we contemplated if made in this spirit would accomplish all the good ~~we~~ wished & none of the evil feared.

2. Address.

In approaching this subject we also needed courage. Truth was progressive. Our Lord said "I have many things to say but ye cannot bear them now but I will send the Comforter, he shall guide you into all truth." Truth grows, or rather our understanding of it grows therefore we ask for wisdom. Anglicanism was a paradox, therefore there was great truth in the Church of England because all truth was expressed paradoxically. This was, because ^{the} human mind could ^{not} apprehend a whole truth therefore language could ^{not} express a whole truth. This resulted in apparent contradiction of language. This movement needed all the intellectual force we could put into it. There was a danger that by easy generalisations we should jump to conclusions. A certain Evangelical clergyman had said that it was necessary for evangelicals to emphasise their point of view because High Churchmen ~~over~~ emphasised theirs. Such an argument would set up a vicious circle. The ~~or~~ best opponent of overemphasis was ~~not~~ over emphasis in the opposite direction but right emphasis. Some argued that the position of women in the past had been so intolerable that it should be now bequeathed that they must ask for every thing at once. That was not right. We must only go as far as we can honestly see. We must attack the spirit of error & not

one point only. If we carry out this suggestion we should provoke reaction. One is inclined to think that a position badly defended is necessarily a bad position. This is not so. There must be better arguments for our opponents than have up to the present been raised.

Augustine Birrell said of Newman that he has an extraordinary power of stating his opponents' case even stronger than he himself could state it. We must state our opponents' case stronger than they have stated it. None are converted by an attack on a position they do not really hold. One bishop who is a feminist said that it made him physically sick to think of a woman as Archbishop of Canterbury. It was no good telling him he would not have been physically sick if a woman were archbishop. The Bishop of Winchester had an "instinct" against women in holy orders. These must have reasons not yet expressed. Only when these are honestly stated shall we begin the task of conversion.

When did the mistaken idea arise that holiness & wisdom were incompatible? Possibly S. Francis gave the impression that learning was unimportant. That wisdom & holiness go together was emphasized in the Bible & prayer book. It was noteworthy that in the Benediction "the knowledge of God" is stated before the "love of God". Christ called his disciples "friends" because they knew him. The divorce between holiness & wisdom was widened with scientific discovery. For the most part religious people fought against scientific discovery, they were afraid of it & left intelligence out of religion. We must reconcile religion & learning, wisdom & holiness. We must recreate the desire for truth above everything & must cultivate intellectual detachment. We owe it to the church that we used the habits of trained minds gained by liberal education. There should be no loose reasoning or passionate thinking. People ~~now~~ have, & perhaps with good reason, a deep seated suspicion of the intellectual honesty of church people. We must alter this

Newman & Huxley, both seekers after truth, apparently at the antipodes has both done us good service by making us

a little more honest. The method by which we work was quite as important as the truth at which we arrived. The search for truth led us into strange places. Wisdom came to seek us, & met us by the way, if we were honest in our search. We must seek to restore intellectual sincerity, & that was the greatest service we could give the church for church people as a whole were devout & spiritual but rarely intellectually honest.

3. address

Miss Royden said that it would be good to seek to find out the attitude of our Lord to women, so as to be sure of his ground before going on to more controversial matters. She read the following passages.

S. Luke I 26-38.

S. John IV 6-26

S. John XI 20-27.

S. John XX 11-18.

Our Lord's attitude was quite revolutionary. His disciples were alarmed. He ignored all distinctions of sex, race & class, so absorbed was he in the individuality of the soul, that he could not, so to speak, trouble to remember these matters. The sex, nationality & mode of life of the woman of Samaria were all against her, yet to her he revealed some of his deepest spiritual teaching. His attitude was entirely democratic. Christianity did indeed turn the world upside down. We had only to study the history of Christianity in the West & in the Mohammedan East to realise this. It introduced the doctrine of the equality of souls. Here, ^{in the West} so far as there was any distinction or repulsion, we recognised it as unchristian but in the East caste was part of religious observance.

We should probably be told that organised religion must necessarily be a conservative force, but such an idea was of recent growth. In the middle ages the church led the people. The Archbishop of Canterbury as head of the church was almost bound to be up against the secular authorities.

Stos. a Becket implored Henry II not to make him Archbishop
 He knew what it meant. He identified himself with the
 rights of the people against encroachment of rights by the civic
 power. After his canonization his cult became so popular
 not because he was a singularly good or saintly man but
 because he had voiced the protests of the people. We speak of
 the democracy of Sparta & Athens but these ^{states} were only governed
 by a small aristocracy. In the "First man in the Moon" by H.G. Wells
 the idea of democracy was so astounding to the "man who was
 all brain" that while it was being explained to him cold water was
 sprayed over him to prevent fever.

The idea was dreamed of by the stories & preached & practiced
 by the Church. In Cervantes Sancho Panza was constantly
 saying "I am a man & may come to be Pope" he could not
 yet say "I am a woman & may come to be Pope!"

In all Eastern religions, whether for good or evil, teaching was
 always specialised for women because they were women & was
 different from that given to men, yet in the teaching of our Lord no
 word was uttered in a way that it was possible to tell & except
 by the context if it was addressed to men or women.

To women he gave some of his greatest messages. The news
 of the Resurrection was given to a woman & the disciples
 thought this word to be "idle tales." S. Luke XXIV 11.

The message of the Annunciation was given to a woman
 Our Lord chose women as messengers not because they were
 women. He just sent them when they were available as he
 would have sent a man. What an extraordinary response
 came from the women to our Lord's teaching. How great was their
 faith.

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To Mary Magdalene in the midst of trouble & apparent failure he was still "my lord" S. John XX 13. While to the disciples on the road to Emmaus he was "Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet" S. Luke XXIV 19. To woman betrayed our lord & the faithful three stood by the cross at the end. Can we therefore conclude that women were more spiritually minded than men they were often more foolish in the respect of common sense & this was sometimes ignorantly taken as a sign of superiority in this matter. Also in the past, from a lack of interest in things outside her own home women were more addicted to going to church. So then this appeal to their humanity was so new & amazing, so wonderful, that it would have been extraordinary if they had not responded.

One often hears that women were always under the influence of the clergy in the Church of England, that in giving a voice to women in the Church more power would be given to the clergy. This was not because of the supposed intense desire of all women to marry curates! For this same state of things was found among nonconformist ministers & Roman Catholic Celibates.

It is because these women had found in the past or thought they had found one who thought of them as human souls without reference to sex. They have ^{since} found that sex does count for more than their humanity & this awaked a keen resentment which is a danger to themselves & the church.

The church must get away from this attitude before she could differentiate between what a woman might or might not do, & before she could be trusted to make use of her women for there was a great difference between being made use of & being made of use. The church is a generation behind the world in her attitude. We were only on safe ground if we emphasised woman's humanity - not her sex.

Reference was made to a major article
 about for women being to share in community.
 in charge of the brotherhood etc.

(8)
Conference & Discussion.

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The Rev. W. C. Roberts took the chair & except when cont
opening the discussion on Church Authority when Miss Royden
acted as chairman.

Dr Roberts read a paper on the meaning of Priesthood

The discussion seemed to turn on the actual meaning of the
priestly office & the confusion between the pastoral office & the
priestly & prophetic offices. Was a woman's point of view
necessary or should she be considered merely as a human
being the question of sex being irrelevant. As we were asking
to take our part in the prevailing system there seemed some
doubt expressed if we could adversely criticise it, but the general
idea seemed to be that our system was built on a misconception
we surely ought to criticise.

Miss Taylor by mathematical formulae proved
that motherhood was not the spiritual equivalent of priesthood
If motherhood = priesthood then an analogy could be formed
that as motherhood : women :: priesthood : men.
but as motherhood was ^{physical as well as a} spiritual relationship while priesthood
was a relationship of soul to soul, this analogy implied the
physical incapacity of man for motherhood & the spiritual
incapacity of woman for priesthood.

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The analogy might be stated

As brotherhood : fatherhood :: $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{woman's} \\ \text{spiritual} \\ \text{ministry} \end{array} \right\} : \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{man's} \\ \text{spiritual} \\ \text{ministry} \end{array} \right\}$

∴ as motherhood : $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{woman's} \\ \text{spiritual} \\ \text{ministry} \end{array} \right\} :: \text{man} : \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{man's} \\ \text{spiritual} \\ \text{ministry} \end{array} \right\}$

Thus the importance of fatherhood is emphasized & the capacity of women for the priesthood admitted.

If pushed to extremes the analogy could be held to prove that Maternal > paternal + woman's spiritual ministry > man's spiritual ministry.

Miss Kilchrist gave a ~~very~~ cursory statement of women's ministry in the past to start the discussion & it was agreed that women had then more opportunity of ministering within the Church than at present, the case of the widows, deaconesses & virgins being cited. The prophetesses of the New Testament were discussed & whether Phoebe was or was not a deaconess as we now understand the term. It was agreed that woman's ministry even as the man's was in the early Church spontaneous & individual, but gradually evolved itself into organised work. It was suggested that in later times Abbesses such as Hilda who had jurisdiction over both monks & nuns were appointed because of their class distinction & on account of feudal ties. It was asked whether women of insignificant percentage ever rose to those positions.

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The Rev W.C. Roberts read a paper on Church Authority

He felt, seemed to be that church discipline was not lax, that rules were broken with impunity, that the prayer book was in a sense edited by individual ~~trust~~ incumbents. It was suggested that the bishops almost invited me to make reforms & innovations in an underhand way in order to show that the demand was really pressing. It was pointed out that Ecumenical Councils were only made Ecumenical by the verdict of subsequent ages of the church, but they had no virtue of themselves as such. The question was discussed how far the hope of reunion with the Roman or the Eastern ~~Churches~~ should deter us from pressing the point of the ordination of women.

It was suggested that those present should form themselves into an association for propaganda work to press these reforms but that was deferred until it should be proved that no existing society, e.g. the Church League, would use its organization for such work.

It was suggested that a meeting of ^{those} clergy who had expressed willingness to have women messengers for the national mission should ~~meet together~~ be called to see how pressure could be brought to bear on the Bishops.

Time Table
Quiet Day and Conference.

Cont
AL/2009

Thursday, April 12th, 1914.
at 92 S. George's Square S.W.

- 8 am. Holy Communion, at S. Saviour's, S. George's Square.
9 am. Breakfast.
9.45. Address and Devotions.
11.45. Corporate worship (in silence) at S. Saviour's
12.30. Second Address.
1.30. Lunch.
3^{pm} 2.30. Third Address and Intercessions.
4. pm. Tea.
4.30 pm Discussion (a) The meaning of Priesthood. ^{Mr Roberts}
(b) Is Motherhood a spiritual equivalent ^{Miss Taylor}
to Priesthood? (c) The Ministry of Women ^{Miss Lilchint}
in the Past.
7. pm. Dinner
8. pm. Discussion (d) Church Authority in relation to ^{Rev. Roberts}
the ordination of women. (e) Suggestions for ^{Canon Street}
Study and Propaganda. ^{Mr. Dyer}
^{Quarrel}

The Quiet Day will be conducted by Miss A. M. Royden.
It is hoped that no one will come to the Discussion
unless also able to attend the Quiet Day. Silence will be
kept until Tea. The charge for the day will be 6/- (to
be put into a box provided.) Intercessions should be placed in
a box provided before the Second Address.

Canon Sweetser
Rev W. C. Roberts
Miss Gleason
Addison

p - Day

- Loe Proctor

- Rock

- Taylor

- Peter Andersonville

+

+

Mr Roberts

- Seaf.

Miss Royden

Miss Hunter.

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