

**WOMEN
AND
PRIESTHOOD**

PAMPHLET

**ANGLICAN GROUP FOR BRINGING
THE SUBJECT OF THE ADMISSION
OF WOMEN TO THE PRIESTHOOD
BEFORE THE NEXT LAMBETH
CONFERENCE.**

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ANG

II, KING'S ROAD,
BARNET,
HERTS.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

This document is private and confidential.

It is for private circulation only and is issued in its present form for the convenience of the signatories to the letter addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Memorandum in this form together with the signatures of some representative men and women, clerical and lay, will be issued to the Bishops of the Lambeth Conference.

A shortened edition will be available for sale to the general public at a later stage. This will contain an explanatory preface, the Memorandum, and appendices A, B, C, D and G.

E. LOUIE ACRES.

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WOMEN AND PRIESTHOOD

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ANGLICAN GROUP FOR BRINGING THE
SUBJECT OF THE ADMISSION OF WOMEN TO
THE PRIESTHOOD BEFORE THE NEXT
LAMBETH CONFERENCE.

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WOMEN AND PRIESTHOOD

A MEMORANDUM

WITH
APPENDICES.

PREPARED BY

A group of Church people, who see no objection in principle to the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood, who have met together on that basis to consider the question in the light of the present discussion on Reunion, to collect information on what has been done in other Churches, and to consider all the practical objections that have been raised on the ground of expediency.

AMERICAN CHURCH FOR BRINGING THE
SUBJECT OF THE ADMISSION OF WOMEN TO
THE PRIESTHOOD BEFORE THE XXV
LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

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To be inserted as paragraph 2
in letter to the Archbishop.

A shortened edition omitting this letter and Appendices E and F will be available for sale to the general public at a later date. The contents of the omitted appendices are, we submit, deserving of special consideration by their Lordships.

A LETTER TO THE MOST REVEREND
THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

President of the Lambeth Conference.

YOUR GRACE,

We desire respectfully to submit the accompanying Memorandum, and to ask that it may be considered at the forthcoming Lambeth Conference. Copies of it are being sent to all the members.

In signing this letter we are acting on behalf of a group of members of the Church of England, both clerical and lay, who, although they belong to various schools of thought, are agreed in this, that they cannot see any objection in principle to the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood. On this basis the group has met together to enquire into the question in the light of the present discussion on Christian Reunion, to collect information as to what has been done in other Churches, and to consider the practical objections which have been raised on the ground of expediency. Great pains have been taken by the group to present a document worthy of the consideration of the Bishops. Eminent scholars have been consulted, in order that the language of the Memorandum may be as exact as possible, and the

appendices will show something of the extent of the enquiries which have been made in other directions.

We agree with the group of compilers in deliberately rejecting the criticism which has been urged in certain quarters that the subject of the admission of Women to the Priesthood is inopportune, or that it is not germane to the discussions of the Conference, for we are ourselves convinced, and we trust that the Memorandum which we submit may convince others, that this question is intimately bound up with any policy of Christian Reunion which their Lordships the Bishops may desire to commend to the Church. But in addition to this we believe that there are other weighty reasons, which the Memorandum also discusses, which render it of the highest importance that something more should be said on this matter than was possible at the Lambeth Conference of 1920.

the group
has
they
Being unable to see any objection in principle to the admission of women to the Priesthood, ~~we~~ *have* dealt in detail and at some length with the arguments which have been brought forward against such admission. If there is any objection in principle which ~~we~~ *we* have overlooked or failed to overcome, we venture to hope that the Bishops will clearly expound it.

It is, perhaps, desirable that we should stress the fact that we and the group for whom we are acting, are mainly concerned with the question of principle, not of expediency. We realise that there is room for a wide divergence of opinion on questions of expediency even among those who, like the compilers and supporters of this memorandum, are agreed upon the question of principle. But we are convinced that it is a matter of urgency that the question of principle

should be faced and answered. And not until this has been done can the question of expediency be dealt with adequately.

We beg to remain,

Your Grace's most Obedient Servants,

CHURCH HOUSE,
DEAN'S YARD, S.W.I.
May 20th, 1930.

WOMEN AND PRIESTHOOD.

WOMEN AND PRIESTHOOD.

The following Memorandum has been prepared in view of the Conference of Bishops which is to take place at Lambeth in 1930. The subjects which will then be considered have been made known to the Church and it will be evident that the Memorandum bears directly upon the fifth division of the programme, viz.: The Ministry. It is, however, important to realise that the question of the place of women in the Ministry of the Church is closely bound up with the question of Reunion, which is likely to occupy a dominant place in the Lambeth discussions. For in some Churches, not of our Communion, women are already exercising what is therein accounted a valid ministry of the Word and Sacraments. If the rents of schism are to be repaired, if the Church of the future is to have a Ministry which shall be recognised as valid throughout the entire body, the question of the position of women with reference to the Ministry cannot be allowed to lie in abeyance.

THE PRESENT POSITION.

The position as it at present exists may be briefly summarised. In the Church of Rome and in the Eastern Orthodox Church, women have no part in the threefold Ministry but we believe it is true to say that in neither Church have they been excluded by any categorical decision which can be pronounced as final and unalterable on the dogmatic principles of those Churches. In the Anglican Communion the resolutions of the last Lambeth Conference recommended that women should be admitted to the Diaconate,* and this recommendation has been acted upon in

* See Appendix A.

certain Churches within the Anglican Communion, though not in all: but the duties assigned to women in the Diaconate are so restricted and the status in practice accorded to them is so subordinate, that it may be doubted whether there is any general recognition that they constitute part of the third Order of the Ministry. As regards the Priesthood, women are not called thereto, Resolution 48 of the Lambeth Conference 1920 declaring that "The Order of Deaconesses is for women the one and only Order of the Ministry which has the stamp of Apostolic approval and is for women the only Order of the Ministry which we can recommend that our Branch of the Catholic Church should recognise and use," † a pronouncement which in our judgment calls for further consideration.

In some other Communion, women are admitted equally with men to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments,—some in theory and practice, some in theory alone. Fuller details bearing upon this subject we have placed in the appendices to this Memorandum. ‡

SUPPOSED HINDRANCES OF PRINCIPLE.

We, who are responsible for this Memorandum, submit that there is no ground of principle upon which women should be excluded from the Priesthood.

We believe it has been asserted that the fact that our Lord, in His Incarnation, took upon Him human nature in a male and not a female form, is sufficient to rule out in principle all possibility of those who represent Him as His Ministers being women. But surely it is His humanity which is essential in the Incarnation. For the purpose under consideration,

† See Appendix A.

‡ See Appendices C. and D.

the sex of that Humanity is no more relevant than His nationality, and it might with equal force be argued that none but men could become members of the Church which is His Body.

We know that it is sometimes said that Our Lord's choice of Apostles shews that He desired to exclude women from the Priesthood. There is, however, no ground for supposing that in His choice of Apostles, Christ was constituting a norm for the guidance of after times: and no one who considers the conditions of the Apostles' training for their task, and the circumstances amidst which their work was to be fulfilled, can wonder that our Lord confined His choice to men.

Nor does the reasoning which appeals to Apostolic authority—and especially to certain Pauline utterances—appear to us convincing. We cannot think that an Apostolic direction to the Church at Corinth in the first century has necessarily any binding power for the Church in England nineteen hundred years later; and, indeed, this has already been abundantly recognised by the practice of the Church which has given women a position of freedom and authority in the life of the Church to-day which would have meant scandal and needless difficulty in the life of the Church in the first century. In considering Apostolic teaching it is necessary to distinguish what is local and temporary from what is universal and permanent.

There remains the argument based on Catholic custom. We examine it later. For the moment we are content to observe that the barrier which it seeks to erect is not really one of principle. We must distinguish between Catholic principles and Catholic customs. If it be asserted that Catholic principles cannot alter, it is equally certain that Catholic customs have altered in the past and may alter in the future.

POSITIVE REASONS FOR ORDAINING WOMEN TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

I. SPIRITUAL EQUALITY.

On the other hand there is a growing feeling that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is hard to reconcile in our time with the fundamental doctrine of the spiritual equality of men and women. That difficulty was scarcely felt in days gone by when women were by custom excluded from practically all positions of authority and influence; but in these days when women are sitting in Parliament, administering justice, practising in the legal and medical professions and filling other positions of public importance, their exclusion from the Priesthood insistently raises the question "why?"; and to answer "because they are women," without alleging any particular in which womanhood is less fitted than manhood for the Office of Priest is in substance to deny the equal spiritual status of men and women in the Church of God.

It is commonly said that differentiation of function is not inconsistent with equality of status. That, of course, is true where the differentiation is along the lines of capacity and fitness. It is when some apparently irrelevant consideration is made the basis of differentiation that the suspicion of inferior status is suggested; and if upon examination the relevance of the consideration cannot be vindicated, then the suspicion is confirmed. *Prima facie*, sex is an irrelevant consideration. It is classed by St. Paul with rank and race as something to be disregarded in the spiritual sphere. It is for those who maintain that sex is a relevant consideration to justify their position by showing wherein it is relevant. Until that is done, differentiation on grounds of sex alone cannot be harmonised with the assertion of equal spiritual status for men and women.

2. THE CHURCH HAS NEED OF THEM.

Moreover, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that amongst women in the East, and in a less degree, yet in a real degree, amongst women of Western culture, women, if called to the Priesthood, might render special service. What they might do in the Zenanas is obvious. At home, while we desire to minimise rather than to emphasise the factor of sex in relation to pastoral work, we do feel that where conscience is troubled, women might in some cases "open their grief" more easily and with greater assurance of comprehension to a woman Priest than to any other, and that women Priests would sometimes be more fitted to give "ghostly counsel" to women than any man can be.

Furthermore the Church has need of all the spiritual resources which it can command for the fulfilment of its task. Owing to the shortage of priests, many members of the Church overseas frequently experience unavoidable delay in the reception of the Sacraments. The place that women took at the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council of 1928* is a matter of history, and the general scope of their work in the mission field is recorded in current missionary periodicals.

Who doubts that a Priesthood more adequate in numbers, more varied in its qualifications is a foremost need of the hour? Is it not possible that one of the reasons why the public and official preaching, teaching and worship of the Church is not commanding the attention which it deserves is this: that the minds and voices of men in its sacred Ministry need to be reinforced by the minds and voices of women, and of women commissioned to speak and minister not merely to congregations of their own sex but to the

* See Article by Mrs. Parker Crane in "The Student World," Oct. 1928.

† This is also seen in the "Enquiry on the Relation of Women to the church in the Mission Field" (Edinburgh House Press).

whole people, men and women alike? These considerations apply equally to conditions at home and abroad. We are deeply concerned lest our part of the Church should be failing adequately to make use of all the sources of supply available for its Ministry in these days of difficulty and opportunity.

3. WOMEN NEED FULL EQUIPMENT FOR PASTORAL WORK.

Nor can we disregard the plea that women, called to what is in effect pastoral work, should have the full pastoral equipment for their tasks. No one who is cognisant of the work entrusted to women workers, especially in our crowded industrial parishes amongst women and girls, can doubt that they do often exercise a very real "cure of souls"; and it gives us pause to reflect that not even the most devout amongst them can look to receive what is normally bestowed by ordination to the priesthood upon men who consecrate their lives to that service.

Moved by these and like considerations, and perceiving no ground of principle upon which women should be excluded from the priesthood, we have been led to consider those practical difficulties which are sometimes alleged to justify their exclusion.

PRACTICAL HINDRANCES.

I. THE STRAIN OF PRIESTHOOD.

It is affirmed that on physiological grounds women are unfit for the priestly office;* that the demands

* This statement sometimes means a belief, often unrecognised as such, on the part of those who make it, that there are recurrent periods when women are ceremonially unfit for any sacred service. If that were so, it would be an objection on grounds of principle. But we cannot think it necessary to urge in this memorandum that the precepts of Levitical law and the taboos of primitive races have nothing to do with the Christian priesthood. Such a view is in our judgment utterly alien from the mind of Christ as revealed in His whole treatment of "the things which defile" and is indeed dishonouring alike to women and to God.

which nature makes on women, more especially in late middle life, unfit them for any occupation involving any serious strain—spiritual, mental or physical. We would answer that both in the service of the Church at home and abroad and in all secular professions and occupations women are bearing such strain, and that we are assured by competent medical testimony that the normal woman can bear such strain without ill effects.* Here and there a woman would break down—as here and there a man to-day breaks down—for a shorter or longer period. That would be all.

2. MARRIAGE.

A more real difficulty arises in connection with marriage. We recognise that the principles expressed in Article xxxii. of the Articles of Religion† would hold good in the case of women as in the case of men; but we further recognise that there are reasons which might for a time limit a married woman in the official exercise of her ministry. It would be necessary for the Church to frame rules dealing with this matter. We believe that in some cases marriage would lead eventually to increased usefulness in pastoral work. On the other hand we can see that some women, as some men, might be led on entering the ministry to set before themselves the ideal of a celibate life, but whatever rules may be laid down for dealing with these practical difficulties, we would emphasise the fact that whatever may be asserted as to the indelible character of ordination to the priesthood for men, applies with equal force to women.

* See Appendix F.

† Of the Marriage of Priests. Bishops, Priests and Deacons are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore, it is lawful also for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

3. SPHERE OF SERVICE.

If we are asked what place we expect women priests ultimately to fill in the ordinary parochial life of the Church we would answer that we expect them to fill the same place as that filled by men. They would, that is to say, be eligible for all curacies and incumbencies; for chaplaincies in institutions, hospitals, schools, colleges and convents. At the moment, there are incumbents who would gladly accept the services of a woman as assistant priest, could such be had, and we believe that it would be an advantage to have one or more on the staff of all large parishes in the future, especially for dealing with adolescent girls. How far they would be appointed to independent charges, time alone would show.

THE BARRIER OF CATHOLIC CUSTOM.

It may, however, be said that though there is no impediment in principle, and though practical difficulties are not insurmountable, to ask for the ordination of women to the priesthood is a vain thing in view of the unvarying custom of the Catholic Church in this matter; that the Anglican Communion cannot of its own authority depart from a custom of the undivided Church; that until Christendom is united, no change in this matter is possible. Upon this point we would wish to make the following observations:—

We must be careful to distinguish between Catholic principles and Catholic customs. Catholic customs are by no means all of them the outward expressions and embodiments of Catholic principles. Some certainly are, and we readily understand and appreciate the instinct which clings to such customs and hesitates to admit any change. Yet even such customs are not strictly unalterable; for circumstances may arise in the course of the Church's expansion

when some hitherto merely local or previously unknown custom may prove itself a more adequate expression or embodiment of some Catholic principle than the custom or lack of custom which it supersedes.

There are other customs, "Catholic" in the sense of being hitherto of universal usage, which owe their origin to temporary conditions present in the *milieu* in which the Christian Church came into existence, or that in which its early growth took place during centuries long past. The universality of such customs up to a certain date in the Church's history is by no means a proof that they can never lapse or change. The successful operation of Catholic principles which they existed to safeguard and express may itself be the chief reason why at some later date they should be superseded, when the permeation of society by the Spirit of Christ has brought about conditions of life and work fundamentally different from those of an earlier and far less Christianised period.

May not the hitherto universal rule of excluding women from the Priesthood belong to this latter class of Catholic custom? If, as we have already attempted to show, no Catholic principle is embodied, it is open to us to consider on their merits the arguments in favour of a change of the custom. And some of the most powerful of those arguments are based upon due appreciation of the vital changes in the social order of Christian communities which have been brought about by the influence within them of Catholic principles for so many centuries. In no respect has this change been so marked as in the position of women.

It was all but inevitable in a community like the Christian Church which historically was Jewish in its origin and found itself confronted in the earlier centuries of its growth by the immoralities too often

associated with the religious rites of the Pagan world, that women should be universally excluded from its priesthood. The maintenance and safeguarding of certain fundamental principles of Christian morality required it. But now that, as we trust, those principles have been sufficiently vindicated and securely established for all future time, may not the duty of more adequately expressing another equally Catholic principle—that “in Christ there is neither male nor female”—require of the Church the supersession of this hitherto universal custom of exclusion?

If it be objected that, though this may be conceivable, yet the Anglican Communion has no authority to make so notable a change in Catholic custom until the whole of the Catholic Church has agreed that it is allowable, we would urge the following considerations:—For the whole Catholic Church to move at once is not the normal or healthy method of progression for it or for any other fully articulated organism. “The simultaneous propulsion of the whole body is not the normal movement of that body, except when healthy movement is suspended by paralysis.”* In the crucial matter of the admission of the Gentiles, St. Peter and St. Paul acted first, and afterwards the step they had taken was ratified by the whole Church.

The Church of England has itself, moreover, already taken a definite step in altering a Catholic custom without waiting for the agreement of the remainder of the Catholic Church. When it deliberately authorised the marriage of the clergy *after* as well as before they had been ordained to any of the three Holy Orders of the Catholic Ministry, there was as little Catholic precedent for this momentous change

* Church Congress Report, 1919, p. 296.

as there is to-day for admitting women to the priesthood. Does the conscience of the Anglican Communion, after three centuries of this experiment, feel that a grievous error in principle was then perpetrated, which has definitely separated us from the unity of Catholic Christendom? If it does not, then it is difficult to justify this action of the Church in the sixteenth century and forbid it to take similar action on the same principle in the twentieth.

May not the ordination of women to the priesthood, like the admission of the marriageableness of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, one of those matters, often very serious and very important in themselves, concerning which it may nevertheless be rightly declared that “every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change or abolish” them? For, as our formularies assert, “it is not necessary that traditions . . . be in all places one or utterly alike, for at all times they have been changed according to the diversities of customs, times and men’s manners. . . . so that nothing be ordained against God’s Word.”*

It may be the case that the Anglican Communion, which we believe has been entrusted by Providence with the peculiarly difficult task of combining traditional Catholic Order with a boldly progressive adaptation of Gospel principles to the changing needs of a world which never stands still, is destined to set an example in this matter, which in time the rest of the Church will be glad to imitate. In this connection it is worth while to remember that the Churches growing up in China and India and elsewhere will play an increasingly powerful part in the work of the Church Universal. They are not likely to be influenced in a question of this importance so much by

* Article XXXIV.

what we call "Catholic customs," (which they regard as Western limitations) as by the fundamental principles of the New Testament. A lead from an ancient historic Church such as the Church of England may make a crucial difference in the future cohesion of the Churches of East and West. If there is no insuperable obstacle, in our inheritance from the past, in the way of making this venture, there are, it would seem, not a few strong reasons, in our hopes for the future, in favour of taking such a step.

WHAT IS IMMEDIATELY DESIRABLE.

In view of what has been set forth we would urge that immediate action should be taken in three directions:—

1. We desire a more explicit recognition that women deacons form part of the threefold Ministry. The language of Resolution 48 at Lambeth 1920 is not really patient of any other interpretation, more especially in view of the report of the committee on which it was based. But the term "Deaconess" has been grievously misapplied in modern times. It has been used by women who were never ordained or commissioned in any way whatever. Confusion and misunderstanding exist and the position should be made clear that women have been re-admitted to the Diaconate, in which they had their place in primitive times.

2. We desire that the functions of women Deacons should be made identical with those of men called to that Ministry. At present those functions are so restricted that in the vast majority of parishes where the incumbent cannot do all the work, he is compelled to prefer the help of an assistant Curate to that of a Deaconess, and this though, as things now are, an assistant Curate can hardly be had. Yet a Deacon-

ess, who could do all that a Deacon may now do, including preaching, and more especially a Deaconess who could administer the chalice at Holy Communion, would be a valuable helper in many parishes.

Is it not the fact that at present an ordained Deaconess is permitted to do only such things as an unordained Reader may also do? Is not this one of the reasons why it is not seriously believed that the Anglican Church has admitted women to Holy Orders? And may not this help to explain why there has not been the response that was hoped for from educated and capable women to the call to enter the Diaconate? If this be so, it is an argument—not against, as is sometimes alleged, but—in favour of enlarging the sphere of women's work in the Ministry.

3. We specially desire an authoritative statement that the exclusion of women hitherto from the office of Priest has been a disciplinary rule of the Church; not the assertion of an incapacity inherent in womanhood. Through lack of such an authoritative statement, the loyalty of many women is needlessly strained and the cause of truth suffers.

SUBSEQUENT ACTION.

We regard the time as ripe, and more than ripe for such a statement. If it were made, the whole question of the admission of women to the Priesthood might then be referred to the Continuation Committee, or to a committee appointed for this purpose, in order that the matter might be further considered in all its bearings, and rules framed to regulate the exercise of the Priesthood by women, when in due time it may have been decided to admit them thereto.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

DEACONESSES: HOLY ORDER: "CHARACTER."

"In our judgment the ordination of a Deaconess confers on her Holy Orders. In ordination she receives the 'character' of a Deaconess in the Church of God; and, therefore, the status of a woman ordained to the Diaconate has the permanence which belongs to Holy Orders."

(Report of the Committee appointed to Consider and Report upon the Position of Women in the Councils and Ministrations of the Church at the Lambeth Conference of 1920).

"The Order of Deaconesses is for women the one and only Order of the Ministry which has the stamp of Apostolic approval, and is for women the only Order of the Ministry which we can recommend that our branch of the Catholic Church should recognise and use."

(Resolution 48 of the Lambeth Conference of 1920).

The question of the status of the Deaconess is vital to the whole matter of the present Memorandum. The resolution of the 1920 Lambeth Conference seems, on the one hand, to endorse the view of her status laid down in their Committee's report; on the other hand, it says that a woman deacon cannot be admitted to the higher orders of the ministry. If we ask for the reason of this limitation the answer seems to be obscure. We are referred to "the stamp of Apostolic approval" as sanctioning the presence of women in the Diaconate (the third "Order of the Ministry"), but as excluding them from any higher Order. But this seeks to prove too much: for in Apostolic days, and for a long subsequent period, the male diaconate was not, as it later became, the recognised apprenticeship to the priesthood. That development has been confined to men, for reasons that in past centuries have been quite intelligible. Now that the question is being raised—a question inevitably appropriate to the social conditions of the modern world—as to whether there is any principle to debar women also from proceeding through the diaconate to the higher orders of the Ministry, it is difficult to see in the arrangement of the primitive Church any grounds for a negative answer.

The revival of the Order of Deaconesses in the Anglican Communion can hardly be intended as a revival of the Order as it existed in Apostolic days. The social conditions of those days limited the Deaconess's sphere of service in much the same way as

'purdah' still limits the sphere of women in the East. Those limitations explain and justify, in Apostolic days, distinctions and exclusions which fail to find any such justification to-day. The revival of the Diaconate for women is not meant to be an antiquarian revival, but an attempt to use the services of women in the ministry of the Church to the best extent possible in the conditions of to-day. The implications of this revival in our day, so far from excluding, do in fact support the plea for the admissibility of women, as of men, through the Diaconate to the higher Orders.

The question of *principle* is really admitted in the claim, endorsed by the Lambeth Committee of 1920, that a woman can have the indelible 'character' of Holy Orders. 'Character' belongs to all three Orders of the Ministry, and carries the same meaning in the lower as in the higher Orders. It follows, therefore, that arguments against the admission of women to the priesthood which are based on 'character' would have had equal relevance against admission to the Diaconate: but in the case of the Diaconate they have already been held not to be valid.

It is surely impossible to face the issues involved in admitting women to the Diaconate and not to admit that what debars women from admission to the other Orders is no question of principle, but the force of long-continued custom: custom which originated in times strikingly different from our own.

This is not the place to give an historical review of the Order of Deaconesses, or of its canonical re-establishment in recent times. This can be read in books such as "The Ministry of Women": the Report of the Archbishop's Research Committee, published by the S.P.C.K.; "The Ministry of Deaconesses," by Deaconess Cecilia Robinson; the Report of the Lambeth Conference Committee of 1920 on "The Ministrations of Women in the Church"; and the contemporary account of the present work of Deaconesses in the "News Sheet," issued by the Conference of Deaconesses, which is published about four times yearly. (Secretary, Central Deaconess House, Hindhead.)

APPENDIX B.

PREACHING AND TEACHING BY WOMEN.

As far back as July, 1916, a resolution was passed by the National Mission Council with only two dissentients in a council of between 70 and 80 persons, urging upon the Bishops "the importance of giving definite directions as to the best ways of using the service and receiving the message of women speakers, whether in church or elsewhere."

In three of the six Reports produced by the Commissions appointed as an outcome of the National Mission, recommendations concerning the prophetic ministry of women appeared. In * "The Teaching Office of the Church," † "The Evangelistic Work of the Church" and ‡ "The Worship of the Church" such recommendations were made as might be "judged consistent with Catholic order and the needs of the times."

The Lambeth Conference of 1920 and also the Committee on "The Ministrations of Women in the Church" advocated the use of women's prophetic gifts.

Sporadic efforts have been made to do this with considerable success and profit to the church in the Groups of the Pilgrimage of Prayer, and in its later development, the Work of Women Messengers, which is now organised on an inter-diocesan basis and has also taken root in the Church overseas. § The movement finds a corporate voice in the "Women Messengers' News Sheet."

This prophetic work has many possible developments, but the future involves the question of official recognition, if the work is to be done with the authority of the Church and not by the encouragement and good will of a few individual bishops.

* Pp. 14. 31. 32.

† P. 36.

‡ P. 12.

§ "News Sheet," Sept. 1929. (Editor, Chapel Court, Kenn, near Exeter.)

APPENDIX C.*

WOMEN AND THE FREE CHURCH MINISTRY.†

In the *Presbyterian Church of Scotland*, as in Methodism, the question of the admission of women to the Ministry has been raised, but is temporarily in abeyance in view of the Union which was then being considered and has since been consummated.

In the *Presbyterian Church in England* the subject has been considered at intervals since 1921, when the General Assembly agreed that there is no barrier in principle to the admission of women to the ministry.

In 1922 the Assembly declared the office of Deaconship and the office of Eldership to be open to women on the same terms as to men and authorised the ordination of women Deacons and Elders in the same manner and subject to their acceptance of the same formula as in the case of men. Many churches have since appointed women Elders and women Deacons, Elders being commissioned in certain circumstances to administer the sacrament of Holy Communion.

In the United States of America, the Presbyterian General Assembly has this year (1929) passed a recommendation giving women full ecclesiastical equality with men in all offices including the ministry. This motion has yet to be presented to the Presbyterian Church, but the outlook is regarded by many as full of hope.

Under *Wesleyanism* there is a large and important Order of Deaconesses, and the warden of the Order has himself headed the movement to secure the admission of women into the full ministry. In 1922 a woman candidate for the ministry was nominated by a superintendent minister and unanimously passed by the members of the Quarterly Meeting. It was held, however, that the regulation did not contemplate the admission of women to the ministry, and the candidate was not allowed to present herself at the Synod.

* In this Section and in Appendix D. the Group, while recognising the fact that the problems of the Ministry in the Churches cited are different from those of our own Communion, has brought certain facts together to show how Churches other than our own are using the services of women. These facts are not necessarily judged to be parallel with the difficulties that must arise when considering our own historic Ministry.

†The Group is indebted for much of the information contained in this section to:—

The Rev. Constance Coltman, M.A., B.D.,
The Rev. W. Russell Maltby, D.D.,
The Rev. W. L. Robertson, M.A.

In 1922, a Committee was appointed, and in 1924 it reported that it "is not aware of any function of the ordained ministry for which a woman is in principle disqualified merely on the ground of her sex." This Report was adopted by the Representative Session of the Conference of 1924. A further Committee presented a report in 1925, when, among other resolutions, the Conference of 1925 adopted one that "in principle a woman is not disqualified for the ordained ministry merely on the ground of her sex." On receipt of the suggestions put forward by the Committee, the Representative Session of the Conference of 1926 adopted the following resolution:—

"The Conference believes that the proposals made in the Report on the admission of women to the Ministry meet the practical difficulties which were in view, and indicate the way forward."

The Pastoral Session, however, found itself unable to accept the proposals of the Committee, so the whole question was remitted to another Committee. This Committee reported to the 1928 Conference which agreed that "a woman who believes herself called of God to the Christian Ministry in our Church may offer under the same regulations as apply to men." It also approved in general the subsequent clauses, but referred the matter to a Committee for the consideration of certain practical points.

In July, 1929, the Conference decided to defer the consideration of the details, in view of the proposed union of the three Methodist churches, in order that the subject should be considered by a Committee to be appointed by the three uniting churches.

Much of the original impulse towards raising the question of the ordination of women in the Methodist Church came from the experience of the Mission Field, particularly in India, where women were actually performing all the functions of the ordained ministry, including the administration of the Sacraments.

In the United States of America the Methodist Church ordains women, but has not yet given them seats in Conference on the ground that they cannot guarantee a charge.

In the *United and Primitive Methodist Churches* there is less objection felt to women ministers, and examples are known of women taking full ministerial duties.

The United Methodists have a considerable Order of Deaconesses and all three Methodist communions use women largely as local, i.e. lay, preachers.

In the *Congregational Church* a definite assertion of sex equality was made in 1917 when the first woman in the denomination was ordained. For many years after the first admission to the ministry the rate of increase was necessarily slow, owing to the prolonged training. The average time is five years, but a longer period is often required for entrance to the Nonconformist Ministry.

As the normal avenue into the Congregationalist Ministry is through one of the recognised theological colleges of the denomination, the opening of these colleges to women students was of prime importance. Mansfield College, Oxford; Hackney and New Colleges, London; Lancashire College, Manchester; Bangor College, Wales; the Scottish Congregational College, Edinburgh, have all received women students for the regular ministerial training, and other colleges, such as Western College, Bristol, have signified their willingness to do so when the need arises.

It should be noted that passing through a recognised training college does not confer the right to ordination, though it is the normal pre-requisite. Ordination depends on a call to its ministry being received from a Congregational Church. Under the democratic government of this denomination, a small minority may prevent such a call from being given. Consequently, even where there may be no opposition in principle, prejudice or dislike of novelty may suffice to make it more difficult for a woman than for a man to enter the ministry. On the other hand, it is a fact that no woman, whether married or unmarried, having received ordination, has retired from the Congregationalist ministry or is without a charge at the present time (October, 1929). There seems no doubt that in Congregationalism there is a growing demand for women ministers both in preaching and in pastoral service. One proof of this was given in 1926, when the Constitution was altered to make women eligible for the chairmanship of the Union, the highest official position which the denomination offers.

In the *Scottish Congregational Union* the first test case occurred in 1929, when a woman who had been called in 1928 to the sole charge of an important church in Glasgow applied for admission to the Union and was admitted by an overwhelming majority.

In *Australia* a woman was ordained in 1927 and in *South Africa* a woman has been admitted, having been ordained in the Spring of 1929.

In 1922 the London Missionary Society decided that "the

Directors accept the principle that sex should not be a disqualification for the ordination of women for service on the Mission Field," and that in the case of women fully qualified and engaged in work for which ordination is desirable, the Directors were prepared—subject to consultation with the Native Church on the Mission Field—to approve of their ordination.

It should be understood that in Congregationalism, as in the other Free Churches which accept the ordination of women, the woman minister receives the same training at the same theological college as her male compeer, receives the same ordination, and performs the same preaching and pastoral functions, including the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Communion of the Lord's Supper, as well as the conduct of Marriage and Burial Services.

In the *Baptist Church* also there is no sex discrimination in principle. Women candidates for the ministry have to take the same training as men.

The chief Baptist Theological College, Regent's Park (moving to Oxford), receives women students.

The National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, more usually known as *The Free Church Council* is the federal organ of the various Free Church Denominations. This body has a president elected annually from one or other of the denominations represented. In 1925 a woman, a distinguished member of the Society of Friends, was elected.

APPENDIX D.*

THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES ON THE CONTINENT. GERMANY.

In the Deutsche Landeskirche the question concerning women theologians, their position and work in the Church, is kept quite distinct from that of the Deaconesses. In this section attention is directed solely to the opportunities for work open to the trained woman theologian.

Up to the present only a few of the provinces have made special regulations but these include Prussia, Hanover, Hamburg, Thuringen, and Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

PRUSSIA.

The woman theologian is given the title of Vikarin and receives the same theological training as men theologians, i.e., three or four years at a University having a Theological Faculty. She is required to pass all the requisite theological examinations and afterwards to have two years' practical training, either in a social institute or educational centre. She must further be a woman of irreproachable character and during the time of her training is expected to be under the supervision of an accredited pastor.

A Vikarin is authorised to conduct children's services and Bible-classes; to give Bible instruction and hold devotional meetings for women and girls, and to take the Confirmation classes. She may give the religious instruction in schools and training centres. She has the Cure of Souls (Seelsorge) among the members of the congregation, but her work is more particularly among the women and girls. Homes for girls, Women's Sections of the Hospitals, Prisons and Almshouses are her special responsibility. She is not authorised to take the regular Sunday services or to administer the Sacraments. If she marries she is required to resign her office.

MECKLENBURG-SCHWERIN, HANOVER and THURINGEN have similar regulations, but the title given to the woman theologian is "Pfarrhelferin." In these provinces she is definitely said to be consecrated to her work and has a seat and vote in the conferences of the provincial pastors. In Mecklenburg-Schwerin she is allowed under exceptional circumstances to administer the Sacraments.

* See note to Appendix C., page 26.

HAMBURG. In the province of Hamburg similar regulations are in force but in exceptional cases a trained worker may be given full priestly sanctions. The regulation runs as follows. "In Frauenanstalten und in geschlossenen Frauenabteilungen von Anstalten kann der Pfarramtshelferin durch Beschluss des Kirchenrats nach den Vorschlägen deszuständigen Pfarramts die Verwaltung des Gottesdienstes und für besondere Fälle der einzelseelsorge auch der Sakramente übertragen werden." One woman theologian has been ordained as "Geistliche" for the Women's Prison and is a conspicuous success. Her appointment was to some extent the result of the request of the Secular Government who recognised the value of the work she was doing, and could do if given full recognition by the Church.

In all the provinces mentioned trained women are at work and have been signally successful.

ALSACE LORRAINE.

The Reformed Church in Alsace has passed regulations allowing a woman, after completing her theological training, to be received into the full pastorate. She is consecrated and allowed to exercise all the duties of a pastor, i.e., the administration of the sacraments, the burial of the dead and solemnization of marriage. She is given the title of "assistant pastor."

If she marries she must resign her office, but should she become a widow, can be reinstated at the request of a consistory.

HOLLAND.

According to a report from Dr. Nicholette A. Bruining the Free Church Sects admit women to the Ministry, and the National Church allows women to be assistant ministers, but they are not permitted to officiate at public ceremonies. These women must all have taken a recognised theological training at one of the Universities.

SWITZERLAND.

In Switzerland the Church in each Canton makes its own regulations. The Churches of Berne, Zurich, Basel, Geneva, Vaud, Grenbunden are each investigating the status of women's work.

ZURICH. Here two trained women theologians are at work and are allowed to share in all the work of the Church. Their

status differs from that of the men pastors in that they must be elected by the Kirchenobersteherschaft and not by the people; further, they receive their remuneration from the congregation and not from the State. They may not be installed as pastors in their own right, but must work in conjunction with a male pastor. They have (like the men) the title, Vikar or Pfarrer.

BERNE. The regulations are similar but the Pfarrhelferin is not allowed to take regular Sunday services or administer the Sacraments.

VAUD. The Free Church accepts women on the same terms as men.

GENEVA. The Church in this canton has this year passed a regulation admitting women to full ordination.

In each of these provinces the women desiring to train for the church are required to take the same university training as the men; the status is quite distinct from that of the deaconess

APPENDIX E.

NOTES FROM THE REPLIES RECEIVED FROM PSYCHOLOGISTS, ETC.

In the course of our investigation, it was found that there were some, who "while *in principle* they could urge nothing decisive against it, nevertheless, feel a deep distrust and even repugnance to the idea of women priests, and that in some cases this was felt so strongly that it seemed that there must be a great deal more behind it than prejudice or mere irrational atavism."

This difficulty was referred to the independent consideration of a number of psychologists. Advice was also asked from anthropologists, physiologists and biologists. Some of these authorities were men and women of international reputation, others had knowledge gained from research in the cause of science, and others again had a wide and varied experience of private therapeutic practice.

Extracts from the replies received are given below.

"I find it extremely difficult to answer your question as regards alleged psychological objections to the admission of women to the priesthood. Indeed, it seems to me that you need the opinion of an anthropologist rather than that of a psychologist.

"I personally find no resistive feelings in my mind about the matter. If I were a priest I might conceivably feel different about it.

"Perhaps the situation is not unlike that of men and women doctors. There, any prejudice once felt has now quite died down.

"I wish I could give you a better and more scientific answer."

(PROFESSOR WILLIAM BROWN, M.D., M.A., D.Sc.)

"From a biological point of view I know of no reason why women should not take part in priestly and pastoral work. I cannot speak from a psychological viewpoint but my wife (a psychoanalyst) considers that the psychological objections are by no means negligible, but that they arise, not from any incapacity in the constitution of women as such, but from unconscious factors influencing the attitude of men towards the entry of women into such a

field. So far as we can see, almost exactly the same arguments apply to women clergy as to women doctors."

(WILLIAM B. BRIERLEY, D.Sc., Rothampstead Experimental Station, Harpenden).

(MRS. MARJORIE BRIERLEY, M.B., B.S., B.Sc.).

"I personally see no reasons which make women less suitable for priestly and pastoral work in the Church than for any other kind of responsible work."

(PROFESSOR JULIAN S. HUXLEY, M.A.,
Zoological Dept., King's College, Lond.).

"I do not see how anything known to medical men can have bearing on woman's fitness for priestly and pastoral work."

(SIR ARTHUR KEITH, Royal College of Surgeons,
M.D., Aber., LL.D., D.Sc.).

"The issue you have to decide is not one that needs for its solution any specialist's knowledge of physiology, biology or psychology. Every man and woman is acquainted with the essential facts that should determine any decision on the matter under consideration. Hence you can regard the appeal to the Cæsar of Science as not necessarily relevant."

(PROFESSOR G. ELLIOT SMITH, Institute of Anatomy,
University College. Litt.D., D.Sc., M.D., M.A.).

"I think the answer to your question is something like this. Every boy child has an attitude of emotional dependence on his mother; he is praised, punished and petted by her, and is comforted by her when he is hurt. The normal man shakes off this dependence when he grows up, and only allows himself to fall into a similar attitude of emotional dependence on a woman when he is ill. The man, who even in health needs to be praised, petted and punished by a woman, and who marries a wife to perform that function for him, is psychoneurotic. The normal man, however, still has in his mental make-up a craving for a woman who will perform this part of mother for him although this craving is repressed by all that part of his character which takes independent manhood as its ideal. The acceptance of the ministrations of a

woman as priest would gratify his craving for the mother. The repugnance of the healthy man against the idea of a woman as priest is, I think, the reaction of that part of his character which represses his craving for the mother substitute. The repugnance is neither atavistic, nor a real argument against women priests. It is a reaction of the personality to a situation really present in the individual himself, but yet one which is not really relevant to the merits of the thing reacted against.

"Suppose we take the example of the most intimate of religious relationships—a man making his confession to a woman priest. To the psychoneurotic man, this might be consciously emotionally satisfying to a high degree. He would be as nearly back to his childish relationship to his mother as he could ever be in adult life. The normal man might view such a situation with complete repugnance, or he may feel (if he is sufficiently clear sighted) that there is something in it that would be satisfying but that it is a satisfaction that it would be weak to accept. In either case his reaction against it would be the result of an unconscious craving for it. The same mechanism would, in a less degree, be at work in his reaction to all other priestly ministrations of a woman—to being preached to by a woman and to having the sacraments administered by her.

"The obvious objection to this account of the matter is that there ought to be a similar reaction of a woman against the ministrations of a man as priest. There are, I think, many reasons why this is not so. Most important is the fact that independence in a woman is an ideal with much less social force behind it than in the case of a man. A woman who turns her husband into a father-substitute is not regarded as abnormal in the same way as a man who makes his wife into a mother-substitute. In fact, at one time, that was regarded as the right attitude of a wife to her husband. Also, there is less dependence in the daughter-father relationship than in the son-mother. Much of the emotional dependence of the daughter is on her mother, so the reaction of the independent woman might well be against the woman priest as mother-substitute rather than against the man priest as father-substitute. Also, we are used to the man priest, and habit tends to overcome repugnance.

"At the same time there is something parallel in the reaction of women towards priests. The psychoneurotic woman who finds emotional satisfaction in the ministrations of a man-priest is exactly parallel to the psychoneurotic man who would find satisfac-

tion in the ministrations of a woman. There is also a certain reaction of women of independent character against priests. It is not uncommon to find a religious woman of independent character who confesses to an irrational dislike of all priests, or who criticises them all with a ferocity which leaves no doubt in the mind of the impartial observer of its irrational character.

"This is, I think, parallel to the repugnance which liberal-minded men confess to the idea of women priests."

(PROFESSOR ROBERT H. THOULESS, M.A., Ph.D.
Dept. of Psychology, the University, Glasgow).

"There are probably a number of reasons why people are so prejudiced.

"It seems to me that one could only get at the truth even approximately, by trying to discover first which exactly of the functions of the woman priest is the one to which objection is made. There are some people, for instance, who would object to women preaching, in exactly the same way that they would object to women going into the professions; as they do not think it is a woman's role to be in any position of command. The causes of this are probably to be found, partly in the traditional position of women, and also partly in their relation to their own dominance by women in early childhood. On the other hand, it may be the other functions of women priests that are objected to, particularly in the matter of confession; and I would suggest that the objection here is much deeper and much more likely to give rise to the 'repugnance' about which you speak.

There are a good many men, who have a "Mother Complex" which makes them seek the aid and help of older or at least more experienced women, who will stand to them in the place of a mother. I think, very obviously, such men might be attracted to the idea of women priests, were it actually to materialise. On the other hand, there are many others whose mothers are associated in their minds subconsciously with physical intimacies of earliest childhood, associated with the sensual activities of feeding, etc. These become repressed, but leave in the mind a sense of disgust at anything of so intimate a nature in relation to women in that position. This does not apply to women in a different position with whom they fall in love and whom they marry, to whom they have the ordinary sensuous attractions; but to have anything like intimate feeling towards one who might be in the place of a mother to them, arouses

up this old sense of disgust and repugnance at the very idea of such intimacy.

"This is very crudely expressed, but I think there is often a complex of that sort at the bottom of such prejudices. When a woman is in the position of a priest, she takes up a position in which she becomes a mother and invites the intimacies of people; and I think it is probable that it is this combination of circumstances which, being similar to the circumstances of earliest childhood, arouses up old feelings which properly belong to the childhood situation. So a man may feel a sense of repugnance at a situation now, that in so many respects is so unlike the original one, because it arouses up the emotions belonging to earliest days. Quite obviously, it is some kind of sex complex which lies at the base of the difficulty, and I think the explanation in most cases is to be found in some such position as the one I have described.

"The man priest, of course, is in the position of father, and is commonly referred to as such; but in relation to the father there is not that same intimacy, and its accompanying feeling of repugnance, as there is with regard to the mother, and therefore, the situation does not apply to him as it would with a woman priest."

(Anon. M.A. OXON., M.B.)

APPENDIX F.

THE HEALTH OF WOMEN.

The medical aspect of the proposal to admit women to priestly and pastoral functions in the Church should not be overlooked, for medical objections in the past have frequently been raised as an argument against women engaging in any new form of activity.

It would appear that were women used officially by the Church in the priestly office, they would not be undertaking a task which in itself is heavier or more exhausting than the duties undertaken by many women in other walks of life, and, to draw but one parallel, numbers of women nurses appear to carry out their daily and nightly duties without interruption except for holidays, which experience seems to point to the fact that the Church would not suffer through the disturbed or irregular execution of duties at the hands of women were they ordained Priests.

MENOPAUSE.

With regard to the argument that the emotional stress and strain felt by women in middle life would unfit them for priestly and pastoral functions: this would seem from a report in **The Medical Woman's Journal*, April 1927, to be much exaggerated.

It would appear that were the choice made of stable, well-balanced women, the difficulties feared by many critics would not arise.

A committee of Medical Women is at present engaged in investigating the effect of the menopause on women, but it is too early for their evidence to be available, although several of the members of that committee placed their knowledge and experience at the disposal of this group in response to our enquiries.

WOMEN'S POTENTIAL MOTHERHOOD.

Menstruation is a perfectly normal process, but many men and some few women look upon it more as a disease than as a natural, physiological function. It is not a pathological process, and when

* By Letitia Fairfield, C.B.E., M.D., D.P.H., Barrister-at-Law, Divisional Medical Officer, L.C.C., formerly Woman Medical Director to Women's Royal Air Force.

pain or excessive fatigue is felt at such times, this can always be traced to some abnormal physical or psychological condition, temporary or permanent. The menstrual period has been brought up as an objection to every profession into which women have wished to enter. It has never yet, on close examination, been found to be a practical objection, and it remains an obstacle merely in the realm of theory. As a result of scientific research on this subject carried on in the physiological laboratory of the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women under the direction of *Professor Winifred Cullis, it was found that there was no change in the basal metabolism, pulse or blood pressure associated with the menstrual period. It was also found that the cost to the organism of a certain amount of work, and the recovery rate from work was the same during this period as in the intervals between.† In a previous investigation a slight premenstrual rise of temperature has been noted, the rise being on an average only 0.2°F.

In attempting any analysis of the reasons which lie at the back of much of the opposition to the Ministrations of Women in the Church, one finds a deep-seated belief that the physical manifestations attendant on women's potential motherhood in some way render them ceremonially unclean and unfit them to approach the Holy Mysteries. This seems strangely inconsistent in a Church which extols maternity in the person of the Mother of Our Lord and remembers with thanksgiving the names of revered godly matrons in the noble army of saints and martyrs.

A number of representative medical men and women were approached for their opinion on the medical aspect of the difficulty. They included Gynæcologists, Physiologists, Neurologists, Surgeons and Physicians: men and women experienced in work at home and abroad as Specialists and General Practitioners and having knowledge of the needs and possibilities of the Mission Field. Extracts from their replies appear below.

‘I personally do not see that women who lead a busy active life suffer from disturbances in health in late middle life—i.e., the menopause period—which render them unfit to continue their work.

* Professor Winifred Cullis, O.B.E., D.Sc.Lond., Professor of Physiology, University of London. Deputy Chairman of the Convocation of the University of London. President of British Federation of University Women, Vice-President of the International Federation.

† See Medical Women's Federation News Letter, July 1926.

"An unoccupied woman—i.e., the spinster of private means and no occupation—certainly could not start at that time to work. But I take it that women entering the ministry would start at about 25 years and put in 20 years good work before there was any question of the menopause at all.

"Dysmenorrhoea, which is the other argument used by such opposition as you mention, should be treated and cured and not borne with by any reasonable woman of the present day."

(MRS. RHODA H. B. ADAMSON, M.D., B.S.Lond.)

(Gynæcologist, University Lecturer in Midwifery, University of Leeds, Lecturer and examiner, Central Midwives Board).

"I do not at all agree with the argument that there are any physiological, biological, psychological or other scientific factors that make pastoral or priestly work of women undesirable.

"The most practical point with regard to it is that in all the other professions in which women engage, no one has suggested the desirability of their retiring earlier than 60 from appointments involving responsible work and initiative; yet by that age all the changes that I gather are in the minds of people who make such criticisms are completely over and the woman has entered upon a physiological life in which the biochemical changes are complete. In normal women these changes cause no disturbance, but I suppose it would be true to say that in all people, men and women, there tends to be a gradually lessening capacity for work as age advances.

"One might theorise a good deal about these things but I think the above practical points are worth more than any opinions I might express."

(LADY BARRETT, C.H., C.B.E., M.D., M.S.),
(Obstetrician and Gynæcologist).

"I see no objection in principle to the ordination of women to the Priesthood; should they desire it."

(SIR JAMES BERRY, F.R.C.S.).

"The emotional disturbances' you speak of are in my experience as a gynæcologist somewhat rare. I doubt very much whether they are of sufficient consequence to unfit women for the work you mention."

(F. J. BROWNE, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.S.Ed.).

"My personal opinion on the subject is that women would be no more hampered by the change of life if engaged in priestly or pastoral work than they are in any other calling. It is the normal thing for a woman to be able to carry on her work, which has usually reached its most responsible stage, during the years that she is passing through the change, and yet no one is aware when that occurs.

"I do not think I have ever found it necessary to advise a patient to modify her work at the change of life, apart from some concurrent illness, which might have occurred at any other age."

(MRS. ALICE E. SANDERSON CLOW, B.Sc., M.D.).

"I am of opinion that women should be admitted to the Priesthood, but those who are should be very carefully selected, not only for their abilities for such service, but from the health point of view, including family history. Any definite 'nervous' family history should be very minutely sifted. With these provisos, I consider there is not a great danger of women being unable to perform priestly and pastoral duties in late middle life."

(W. McADAM ECCLES, M.S., M.B., Lond., F.R.C.S.Eng.).

"1. MENSTRUATION. Those who have been properly instructed about the onset, significance of, and hygiene during the period, suffer not at all, and have slight or no discomfort (unless, however, they have actual malformation). There is a tradition that women should suffer at this time, and make semi-invalids of themselves, and it dies hard. One hopes it will soon be quite dead and this will in great measure be due to the excellent teaching in such matters at our large Schools.

"2. MENOPAUSE. I cannot speak much about the physical ailments of this time, but I can, however, speak of the mental and nervous disturbances as I have specialised in these disorders for nearly 20 years.

"It is my opinion that the great majority pass through this period with little or no nervous disturbance. Many patients one finds, however, come to one between 40 and 45 years of age with all manner of symptoms due to chronic sepsis, errors of diet, etc., and are obviously keen to be told that this is due to the menopause. Many doctors do assure them, or rather reassure them, by saying this is so—thus the tradition is still kept going.

"It is true that there are a certain number of break-downs at this time—all adjustments are somewhat difficult, but men have a somewhat similar adjustment to make.

"I may say that in the hundreds of cases I have seen in private practice and in hospital, free clinics and so on, I have never had a case brought whose symptoms were emotional or passionate ones. The popular novel of the "dangerous age" type is responsible for this myth. In the case of lazy women with nothing to do with their time, it may be true, but it certainly is not of the housewives and other workers of this world."

(MRS. MABEL EMSLIE HUTTON, M.D., Ch.B.Edin. Neurologist. Croix de Guerre, France; Order of White Eagle of Serbia; Order of St. Anne of Russia).

"In my opinion the point you raise has been satisfactorily answered by the success women have achieved in the Medical Profession even, if not yet, in the Legal Calling also. You do not ask me to debate the subject of the admission of women to the Priesthood as a whole, so that you must take my answer as confined strictly to the reference contained in your letter. Women have attained great distinction as doctors and surgeons despite the physical disabilities with which they have to contend, and this fact provides an eloquent answer to the argument that she would fail in other vocations which she might feel prompted to adopt."

(CUTHBERT H. J. LOCKYER, Obstetric Surgeon, M.D.Lond., B.S. F.R.C.P.Lond., F.R.C.S.Eng.).

"I think it is perfectly absurd that women are considered unfit for priestly functions in middle life. Surely when the reproductive function is over, women are all the more suitable for public work. Women in middle age are often at their best, and with normal women there is not the slightest physiological reason why they are not as fit as men in middle life. I assure you of this from a medical point of view."

(PROF. DAME LOUISE MCILROY, D.B.E., M.D., D.Sc.)

"My own opinion is that women are just as fit as men to undertake priestly or pastoral functions.

"I have had long experience of women going through the

climacteric—which I suppose is the period alluded to—and I have only found emotional disturbance and instability in those few women who have a family history of hereditary nervous instability.

"In my own profession, both physicians and surgeons, and general practitioners, seem to acquire their largest practices just in those years of middle life to which you refer, showing at any rate that patients do not hesitate to call in their services then.

"I am inclined myself to think that women are of most real use then, they have acquired a wide experience and larger knowledge of the world, and more understanding of the needs of others.

"In the case of surgery, technique is at its best then, and judgment, the most important asset in a surgeon's equipment, will have developed to its full capacity.

"I do not know what qualities are most needed in the clerical profession, but I should imagine, in addition to the cardinal virtues, judgment, intuition, industry, and discretion are all desirable, and these are certainly not peculiar to the male sex; while all are agreed that staying power and endurance are as often found in women as men.

"I take it the chief thing is the sense of a vocation, and that surely no one has a right to legislate against."

(MISS L. MARTINDALE, J.P., M.D., B.S., Lond.).

"I feel so strongly that the priestly office is paternal and a mistake of function for a woman that you must let me record that fact before giving you my medical opinion. My experience teaches me that the most difficult age for single women is between 32 and 34 rather than at the menopause, any nervous instability being more likely to be serious then. The childless married woman is rarely, if ever, of serene and even temperament, but with her, definite nervous trouble is more probable in middle age. The pregnant woman can never be depended on, she may easily be at her best, and on the other hand be of those who suffer much from the toxæmias of pregnancy.

"In the Anglican Church with its married priests, the woman would suffer from the 'inferiority' sense if unable to do so. I do not mean of course consciously. This matters because that particular sense re-acts by making the possessors self-assertive and finally quarrelsome.

You will understand that I think the time of life a comparatively superficial difficulty compared to the essential sex of the individual.

(MISS ISABEL PULTENEY, M.D.Brux.).

“My personal opinion is that the professional woman and working woman carries on her work throughout all ages and as well as any man. I can personally see no reason why a woman in late middle life should suffer from any physical disability which would prevent her carrying on priestly or pastoral functions. I think you can cast round and see many women to-day at forty-five and onwards doing wonderful work with the judgment that only years can give.”

(MISS MABEL L. RAMSAY, M.D., L.R.C.S.Edin.).

“There is really nothing in it at all. The bulk of women go through the change of life with very little discomfort—certainly not enough to make them give up their work. There is practically no instability or emotional disturbance. Whenever women have anything the matter with them between forty and fifty-five it is put down to change of life, most unfortunately, for some women are on the look-out for something, they know not what, and are often terrified.”

(MISS JANE WALKER, J.P., M.D., L.R.C.P.I., L.R.C.S.).

“The changes of late middle life, while they do certainly cause a certain amount of discomfort and possibly strain, are such as need in no way interfere with the life and work of healthy, reasonable women. The great majority of women get over this time with no more disturbance than young people of both sexes experience in adolescence, and I do not think that the fact that women are subject to such change need be any bar to their undertaking any occupation for which they are fitted on other grounds.

“The difficulty lies in the fact that women who are in any way unbalanced or unstable tend to find their eccentricities increased as life goes on, and perhaps very sharply increased in late middle life. The main point, therefore, is not to exclude from work those who are subject to periodic physical changes, but those who from the start are excitable, unsteady and in any way fanatic in their outlook. If you choose for any work women who are healthy, wise

and with a sense of humour, they are in no way more likely to fail with advancing years than their men colleagues.”

(MISS ISABEL G. H. WILSON, M.D., D.P.M.).

“I am quite sure that the health of many women in late middle life is so frequently upset by the periodic conditions of that time, that they are unsuitable for priestly and pastoral functions.”

(MRS. JUSTINA WILSON, M.R.C.P.,Edin., D.M.R.E.Camb.).

APPENDIX G.

FRUSTRATED VOCATION.

The following extracts—for the most part quotations from letters—are inserted in the hope that, taken as typical and in no sense exhaustive, they may serve to show that the desire for ordination to the priesthood is sometimes present in women, when least suspected or recognised by their contemporaries. When a man becomes aware of a call to serve God and His Church in the Ministry he goes to some sympathetic friend—probably a trusted lay-tutor or an understanding priest or bishop—and talks the matter over, when, if he is a suitable candidate, he receives the utmost encouragement. When a woman feels the call, to whom shall she turn, when she knows that the officials of her Church would probably deny the reality of her vocation and bid her seek satisfaction in other spheres of service? It is extremely difficult to work for the establishment of a principle, when it looks like claiming a privilege or demanding a right.

For obvious reasons the contributions are anonymous, but those responsible for drawing up the memorandum, vouch for the authenticity of the extracts and the worthy ideals and aims of the writers. The letters were received from women well-known in the religious and social world, as well as from those unknown outside their own parish and immediate circle. Some are university women with academic honours in theology and other studies which would be counted distinct assets to any male ordinand. In some instances degrees and details of work and experience are stated in order to give an idea of the intellectual standing of the writers.

No attempt has been made to bring these quotations into any common form, but, with a minimum of editing, they have been published as received.

1. "The following experience may have some bearing on your enquiry. During the war I had been addressing a gathering of women on some question of Social Reform; after the meeting, when the children came in, I was speaking to the mothers individually about their children's careers. One mother, young and very intelligent-looking, in reply to a question concerning her daughter's future, said that she was too little to know what she wanted to be, but she, the mother, hoped her daughter might be a priest. She told me that she had wished it for herself, but thought her longing

must be wicked, but now she hoped it might be possible for her little girl. The mother, so far as I could find out had never read any literature on the desire of women for a fuller ministry in the Church, or discussed the question with those who wished to see women called to the priesthood. This seemed to me significant."—
(Diocesan Lecturer). *Mrs. Acres*

2. "We are told that the best women do not desire the priesthood, indeed that the 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. We are also told that holy women in the past never desired that privilege. 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 realisation of possibilities hitherto unimagined? And again, how can we tell what silent cravings filled the hearts of these loving women as they did all for the altar except the central act. Amongst the writer's own most vivid 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 conventions and habit, that the possibility of women priests never, at that time, even dawned upon the mind." *Mrs. Atkins*

3. "When I was about ten years old I first felt a strong desire to enter the Ministry of the Church of England, in which Church I was brought up. It gradually dawned upon me that as I was a girl this was not allowed to me, and I tried to put away the idea, being of a practical nature, and not seeing any sense in battering my head against what appeared to me a stone wall. The idea kept coming back to me with renewed strength. I tried to strangle it in bitterness against religion, but without success. It came to me with absolute certainty that the ministry was my vocation when I was doing social work in the slums of London. I still hope that a way may be found by which I can fulfil my vocation."—(M.A., Oxon. Hon. School of Modern History. Two and a half years Library work, a year of social work). *Kathleen Compton? Cecil Barber (Friend)*

4. "Most assuredly, I would have presented myself as a candidate for Holy Orders at any time in my life had the Church of England

decided to permit me. For generations, there have been those in my family who have done quiet useful service, and through those more immediately behind me, I have had experience of all parts of pastoral, parochial and organising work. It seems a pity that in the highest service there should be no power to claim wanted work from a woman of the same standing as her men—there might be no personal, but there must be general loss. The trouble is—I have felt it—that in this service those qualified in all respects, except as women, could not work as lawyers and doctors might work for recognition.

But I wished very much that in my day the call might come, and I very much wished that others should have been able to take over departments of work needing their own gifts, and as in other affairs, to join with men in work needing the whole power of both man and woman. My own strength is on the wane, but I would gladly seek ordination to-morrow, were it possible.”—(Student and Licensed Teacher in Theology) *Miss Blackburn*

5- “Ever since I can remember I have wanted to be a priest. This has made the consideration of a career difficult; I had to try to want other things when there has only ever been one thing that I *really* wanted.

When I came down from Cambridge four years ago, I tried various things. Finally, I decided to read Theology at King's College, London, and last June I passed the London Diploma in Theology. Since then I have been trying to find avenues for which this could be useful, and the search has been bitterly disappointing. The only thing I can see is to teach Divinity in girls' schools. While I like this, and think it well worth doing, it does not give what I feel my vocation demands. A priest's office is to teach, but the pastoral aspect of his work is at least as important. If ever, while I am young enough, the sacred Ministry were thrown open to women I should go at once to a Theological College, and endeavour to take Orders.

Meanwhile I intend to go on trying to find a useful sphere of work, as I know that God will not allow the vocation which He has given me to be wasted.” *Shawne Cooper*

(The following extract seems to illustrate the point made by an earlier contributor on the ‘general loss’ to the Church by the exclusion of women from the ministry).

6 “Being the daughters of a priest, the grand-daughters of two priests, the great-grand-daughters of a Bishop and having had three Archbishops in the family in two generations, the urge to pastoral work was part of our make up from our earliest childhood in the case of myself and my two sisters. Though brought up by our mother to consider women the equals of men, in our youth, the idea of the priesthood of women was not even an idea. Our brother became a priest, one sister joined a Religious Community and the other two did the pastoral work of a priest; preparing for baptism, for confirmation, for first confession, &c., without realising that we were doing it without the grace of ordination. Again, as to preaching, much as I felt I could preach, I simply looked upon it as impossible, and used my powers in public speaking and in writing notes for sermons which were used by a priest. Therefore, while I cannot say I actually wished to be a priest, had I been a man I should have sought ordination.” *Barford Rux*

7 “Few will deny that only a comparatively small number of men have a vocation for the priesthood. The shortage of clergy is not only due to lack of funds for training. From that, it follows, almost incontrovertably, that only a comparatively small number of women have a like vocation. Therefore, it cannot be urged, as an argument against the admission of women to the priesthood, that only a few ask that inestimable privilege and responsibility.

Again, if a man proclaim that he feel a vocation, he is not told that he can satisfy the hunger and desire that a sense of vocation gives by reading the lessons, giving an occasional address and visiting the sick. And yet, at present, that is the answer given to women by the most generous, the most enlightened, with but few exceptions.

I know from my own experience, that women with the gift of vocation can only be satisfied if the voice that reads the lessons can also read the Prayer of Consecration; if the hands that tend the sick and guide the erring and the young have been sanctified by administering the Consecrated Elements.

Women with a vocation will lose that most deadening sense of frustration when—and only when—the mouth that preaches and exhorts is dedicated by being the channel through which life-giving words of absolution pass.

Can this insistent urge, this most importunate call, not be used both for Christ's glory and the glory of His Body, the Church?”

8 "One is apt to turn very bitter when one realises that one's own vocation and the vocations of one's friends are not being used by the Church to the enrichment of life, and so to the glory of God. I did go through a period of intense spiritual bitterness, but all that passed, and I could once more thankfully receive the ministrations and use the sacraments of my Church after I had determined that at every Church in which I worshipped, at a public service or in private prayer, I would make an Act of Faith that one day a woman priest would stand and minister at that particular altar."

9 "Why I wish to be ordained as priest.

Because, since I was fourteen, I have felt I had a vocation for work in the Church, and since that time have always been keenly interested in theology and things of religious significance and in the conversion of souls.

Because I knew that I could preach as well as teach, if I had the opportunity and training—my qualifications were as good as, or better than many clergy (e.g., classical tripos, Class II. Cambridge, Lambeth Diploma in theology, class I.) and my experience wider than many young deacons. I wanted to teach and preach, and fortunately I have had some opportunity in the diocese in which I live. (If preaching and teaching are denied to women in Church, it tends to make them over-critical and unresponsive in the pew!)

Because I wanted to be able to celebrate Holy Communion and to baptise—these acts of beauty and fellowship, to which a woman's creative spirit responds—also because it irritates to find a male celebrant called in from outside to minister to a Woman's Retreat or to a girls' boarding school.

Because I have a "concern" for personal friendships and pastoral care of individual souls. Some of my best work has been done through confirmation classes and individual contact in spiritual things.

I should like now to be ordained as deaconess (although married) if:—

(a) More opportunities and scope were given to deaconesses in the ministry of the Church.

(b) A deaconess house could be started on modern lines: with a modern uniform." *Ms Rogers*

10 "I find it very difficult to send you anything on the specific point you raise. So far as I know there are not many women who feel the vocation to the priesthood, and those who do, and who

come to me for advice, invariably insist on their desire being kept as a very sacred secret. There is something which I can hardly put into words which makes it very difficult to let it be known that one believes herself called to this work. If there were any authority to which the vocation could be submitted (as in the case of men) it would be simple. But as the claim rests entirely on one's own personal judgment, which no one in authority will ever examine or confirm, the sense of being presumptuous is very difficult to overcome.

I hardly know what to say even in my own case. The sense of vocation did not come to me until comparatively late. Being brought up in orthodox Anglican circles, it seemed to me that a complete inhibition existed, and that the utter and apparently final impossibility of a woman taking any part at all in the ministry of the Church made it really impossible for such a sense of vocation to arise. I think this inhibition is not sufficiently seriously considered, or its completeness realised, when people speak of the lack of desire among women themselves to be ordained to the priesthood. My own sense of vocation arose in proportion as I found that such gifts as I had were needed, and welcomed, up to a point; that I was therefore able to develop them; and that I then realised the joy of consecrating them to the service of my Church.

While I was still young, the need for women speakers in politics—both in party politics and non-party politics such as the struggle for the suffrage—was beginning to be strongly felt. There I found that I was a speaker, and that, as a speaker, I could be of real service. Very soon I realised that this service could be, not only political, but religious. More and more I began to speak, even on severely political platforms, on the religious aspect of the political enfranchisement of women. . . . It was only after repeated and urgent invitations that I found myself able even to realise what it could be to preach and to preach in a consecrated place. Even then, I never dreamed of preaching more than one Sunday. When I had done so and was asked to go again, I once more refused. I don't know if I was particularly slow and cowardly in the face of these long life-long inhibitions, but I know that it was extraordinarily difficult for me to overcome them, or to believe that I could be of service in work which, all my life up till then, had been completely, and it seemed finally, denied to me.

Again—no doubt owing to my slowness of development—it was some time before I realised how near the office of the priest

lay to that of the preacher, and how artificial it must often seem that they should be divided. . . . I belong to a little society of people who make frequent retreats, and at these retreats desire to receive the Holy Communion. . . . It seems to me quite extraordinarily artificial that at such times, we, who are joined together with a very deep and real fellowship, should have to scour the country for some priest, who knows nothing whatever about our society or about us, who has the claims of his own work and his own people on his mind, and does not in the least wish to be fetched, often from a distance, to minister to us in the early morning, when after all, in a very real sense, I am myself their priest.

Again it often happens that some one of those who honour me with their confidence desire to make sacramental confession. It seems to me most natural and right that, if they have confidence in me, and if it is through me that God has brought them to repentance, they should desire to make their confession to me and receive absolution.

I do not know if I make myself clear by these isolated instances and I fear also to seem very presumptuous; but I must sum up all by saying that the relation between myself and these others seems to me to be increasingly that of priest and flock, and that their desire that I should minister to them sacramentally is equalled by the depth of my desire that I should be allowed to do so, and by the sense of frustration that I have when I am disallowed." *Ryden*

11 "From young womanhood, all my energies have been directed to social and religious work. There can be no doubt that, had I been a man, I should have asked to be allowed to receive Holy Orders. As it is I have taken a theological diploma, and graduated in Theology and Philosophy only to find that there is no suitable work for me within the Church on account of my sex. Clergy and lay friends alike have advised me to work independently of the Church: the Church for whose service I trained."—(M.A., B.D.Hons.) *Sarabahn Marshall*

12 "I think it is highly probable that I should have sought ordination, had the way been open, though the absence of opportunity has naturally prevented my desires from setting in that direction. Philosophy and theology have always been among my chief intellectual interests. I hold an honours degree in classics, and I have specialised in Greek philosophy. My work as a college

lecturer has kept me in touch with young people; and I have taken such part as I was able in the activities of the Student Christian Movement in College, e.g., reading papers and conducting discussions. I have often found myself in the position of religious adviser both to my juniors and my contemporaries, at College and elsewhere." *M. Taylor*

13 "I have no objection whatever to making public that I would have applied for ordination had I been a man. I have spent the last twenty-three years searching blindly every known means for its equivalent as far as is possible for a woman. You are doubtless well aware how far the Church has tried to help and how far to hinder in this effort to realise one's vocation. I see no reason whatever for keeping the matter in any way secret or mysterious; it is for the authorities of the Church to explain why they have tried to "quench the Spirit" of God, not for us to be silent in the matter, it seems to me."

(Two Honours Degrees, one in Divinity; University Teachers' Diploma: several years' Social Work and Teaching experience.) *West*

14 "Go ye . . . and preach the Gospel" is the message which burnt itself into my heart when I accepted Christ as my Saviour while still in my teens. In seeking to obey this command, there has always been limitation of opportunity and often definite opposition merely on the ground of sex.

I think it must be admitted that the services of many women with evangelistic and pastoral gifts are either not being used at all, or only in an extremely limited capacity, chiefly through their exclusion from the ministry.

Quite simply, the problem appeals to me in this way.

The call to service for Christ becomes more and more insistent as one studies the needs of men and women, and I fail to see how a woman can ignore His call and claims merely because she finds herself opposed on every side on account of her sex. She must press on. Therefore, the practical course to pursue is to attempt to remove the obstacles which lie in her path.

Meanwhile, women have to content themselves with the unnecessarily narrowed spheres of service at present open to them."

15 "I desire to offer myself as a candidate for Ordination because I "think in my heart" that I am "moved by the Holy Ghost" and

"truly called according to the Will of Our Lord Jesus Christ" to "the Office and Work of a Priest."

This sense of vocation is stronger than all the forces that have tried to stifle it, and I am persuaded it is of God. It came to me entirely from within, i.e., that at the time I became conscious of it I had not heard nor read anything on the subject of the admission of women to Holy Orders, neither had I come in contact with any person interested in the matter. But as I grew to understand the nature of the Faith into which I had been baptized, and the blessings that were mine through, and only through the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, I came to know that I, in turn, was called to this "same Office and Ministry appointed for the salvation of mankind." I was aware of my unworthiness but I accepted the call quite naturally, for I had been brought up from childhood under conditions which made sex no barrier to service. I knew that I was not as yet "apt and meet for my learning," I knew that my "conversation" must become more "godly" but, incredible as it may seem to some, it never occurred to me that the Church would regard my sex as an "Impediment and notable Crime" and I set out in simple ignorance of the bitterness and opposition that awaited me.

I now find it extraordinarily hard to remain loyal to the Church I long to serve, and more than once my Faith has broken under the strain of an attitude I have found yet the harder to understand the more I have come to know of Catholic Theology. Moreover my work in the Teaching Profession among young people of varied ages and both sexes has served to show me my own poverty without the grace of Holy Order. Without that grace there are lives I can in no real sense touch and there are souls the poorer through lack of the life-giving Sacraments I have no power to administer.

As to the one historic Diaconate, I gladly offer myself for service therein, but after careful consideration I find I cannot, however extended the scope, seek admission to the Order of Deaconesses as it is at present presented to the Church.

I believe in the Catholic Church as God's appointed means for the salvation of the world, and whatever Our Lord did not do in the days of His Flesh, I only know that to fullness of service in the historic Ministry of His Church, He is, in these days, calling me. But my hands are tied and (I say it in all humility) His work is hindered until the Church too hears that call.

16
"When I left school I was quite sure that, if it had been possible, I should have sought ordination. The next best thing seemed to be missionary work, so I offered myself to S.P.G., but was not accepted until some years later, and then had to retire after one year's work in India. There have been times when it seemed as if the religious life might be the solution of my problem, but it is quite clear that this is not so. I love teaching, and have no sense of having lived a frustrated life, but am perfectly conscious that for me it is only a substitute.

I am a secondary school teacher and hold the certificate of the National Froebel Union and an LL.A. (St. Andrews) Honours Diploma. For the last four years I have been training native teachers in a State-aided institution on a South African mission; before then I taught in South Africa for three and a half years, in London for one year, in India for one year and in Wales for six years."

17
"I have little doubt that had I been a man, or had ordination been open to women, I should in my youth have presented myself as a candidate for Holy Orders. Whether or not I should do so now I am not sure. The literary work which occupies me would be incompatible with complete absorption in pastoral work, and I should be faced by a very strong conflict of loyalties in making a decision. Although I seem to have found a life-work otherwise than in the priesthood, I still (after twenty-five years) frequently feel myself urged in directions in which, I imagine, men priests feel themselves urged. My conflict would be analogous to that of a man with a sense of double vocation to medicine and to the priesthood. I might, as men sometimes do, find myself attempting to fulfil two vocations. I do not feel that my conflict would have anything to do with the fact that I am a woman.

I have been a clergyman's wife for twenty-one years. I am a B.A. of London University (External degree in Philosophy, First Class Honours) and have had experience as lecturer and coach in Ethics, Psychology and English."

PAMPHLET