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Society for the Ministry of Women
(Interdenominational)



Annual Report
1936

Pamphlet

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SOCIETY FOR
THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN
(INTERDENOMINATIONAL)

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MISS IVY L. PRYKE, St. Multose, Newcombe Park, Mill Hill, N.W.7.

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MRS. ROBERTS, B.A.

Editorial Board:

REV. CLAUD COLTMAN, B.Litt.; Miss M. E. J. TAYLOR, M.A.

AIM.—To attain the ideal that in the ministry of the Church of Christ no distinction should be made between men and women.

With this object to work for—

- (1) Equal opportunity in training and service for women ministers in those Churches in which the principle of equality is already recognised;
- (2) The full ordination of women in those Churches which do not at present grant it: or in the case of those Churches which do not use the word "ordination," its exact equivalent.

MEMBERSHIP.—All persons of 18 years of age and upwards calling themselves Christians, who are in agreement with the above object and who pay an annual subscription of 1s. or more, are eligible for membership of the Society.

Members are asked to subscribe according to their means, it being understood that 2s. 6d. is the minimum subscription that really covers the cost of their membership of the Society. All members receive the quarterly news-sheet, *The Coming Ministry*.

Affiliated Societies:

Edinburgh Equal Citizenship Society.
Fellowship of Equal Service in the Church (Church of Scotland).

Seventh Annual Report.

The preface to the last Annual Report recorded a general postponement of the question of the admission of women to the ministry in the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches and in the Church of Scotland. While no further advance in those Churches has been made during the past year, the air has been somewhat cleared in the Anglican Church by the publication of the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on the Ministry of Women on December 6th, 1935. Although the Commission do not "feel able in view of past history and existing conditions of the Christian Church to recommend the admission of women to the priesthood," they are obliged to confess that "the Commission as a whole would not give their positive assent to the view that a woman is inherently incapable of receiving the grace of Order and consequently of admission to any of the three Orders." It will be remembered that the Sub-Committee on the Ministry of Women appointed by the Lambeth Conference, 1930, stated that "a majority of the Sub-Committee believes that there are theological principles which constitute an insuperable obstacle to the admission of women to the priesthood." The Society in correspondence with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Blackburn (Chairman of the Sub-committee)* endeavoured in vain to discover what those "theological principles" might be. The Commission now reporting states that theological principles on both sides have been formulated, "but they do not appear to us to compel decision." It is quite clear, therefore, that the Commission are unable to base their decision against admission of women to the priesthood on theological principles. Their decision, in fact, is governed by expediency and tradition. The Commission affirm "it is our conviction that this consensus of tradition and opinion is based upon the will of God," but (as the Dean of St. Paul's drily remarks in his valuable Note, referred to later in this report) "it is not asserted that this definite decision is irrevocable, since the possibility is left open that the Christian Church might at some future time take the view that women could become priests." The conclusion of the Commission is that "the right solution of the whole problem" is to be found in the development of the Deaconess Order and extension of opportunities for lay women workers. In this the Commission entirely fail to appreciate that God has called and is calling some women to serve as *priests*, and that for the Commission (or the Episcopate assembled at the Lambeth Conference) to offer those women something to which they are not called, does not meet the situation.

* (See *The Coming Ministry*, Easter, 1931.)

During the fortnight preceding the publication of the Report, the President and the Hon. Secretary were continually being approached by the Press (who had received advance copies of the Report) for statements. As repeated efforts of the Hon. Secretary to secure advance copies for the Society (as one of the bodies invited to give evidence before the Commission) had been unsuccessful, it was felt that no useful purpose would be served by commenting on second-hand information given by the Press over the telephone.

An Emergency Meeting of the Society's Executive Committee was called for December 6th, the day of publication of the Report, and a statement was prepared and signed by Dr. Maude Royden as President, who was present at the meeting. This statement was widely circulated to the Press on the following day, and was printed in the Supplement to *The Coming Ministry* for December, 1935.

Further notes on the Report of the Commission will be found under the Section, *Present Position—Anglican Church*, on pages 6 and 7 of this Report.

ANNUAL MEETINGS, MAY 28TH, 1935.

The Annual Meeting of members, held in the Council Chamber, Caxton Hall, Westminster, on May 28th, 1935, at 6.15 p.m., was presided over by Dr. Maude Royden, C.H., LL.D., President of the Society. This meeting was followed by a Public Meeting, the Chair being taken by Dr. Royden and the speaker being Dr. Herbert Gray. Dr. Royden in her opening remarks said that she felt the cause of the ministry of women was bound up with the question of peace; that a world which relies in the last resort on material force cannot but be inimical to the claim of women to equality with men. Dr. Gray stressed the point that for the sake of the Church and the world both women and men are needed in the ministry in order to give an adequate presentation of the truth. On the suggestion of Dr. Gray it was agreed to send to women ministers a message of sympathy and cheer, thanking God for their courage and praying that His blessing may rest on them and their work.

CONFERENCE, FEBRUARY 22ND, 1936.

A Conference on "The Cause of Women and the Cause of Peace" was held at Markham Square Congregational Church, Chelsea, on Saturday, February 22nd, 1936. The point the Conference was called to consider may be stated in the following quotation from a speech by Dr. Royden: "The claim of women to be the equals of men is not logical if war, which is the ultimate expression of physical force,

is accepted as in the last resort necessary." The Chair was taken by Miss Storm Jameson and the speakers were Dr. Royden (who took the view expressed above) and Rev. A. E. N. Simms, B.D., and Miss M. E. J. Taylor, M.A., neither of whom felt that the claim for equality was inconsistent with the use of force in opposing evil.

Delegates attended from the Society of Friends' Peace Committee, the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Baptist Missionary Society, the Salvation Army, the Guildhouse, the Association of Assistant Mistresses in Secondary Schools, the Open Door Council, the Greyladies, the Westminster Branch of the L.N.U., the Women's Freedom League, the Rochester Diocesan Board of Women's Work, the Presbyterian Women's Home Church Committee, the Edinburgh Equal Citizenship Society, the National Council of Women, and the National Peace Council. The Secretary of the Central Council for Women's Church Work was also present.

The audience included visitors from Holland, Australia, and New Zealand.

OTHER MEETINGS.

Meetings to which the Society was invited to send speakers during the past year, with the names of the speakers sent, were as follows:—

Ruislip and District N.C.W., Sept. 27th, 1935. Rev. Irene Robbins, B.A.

Petersfield Society for Equal Citizenship, Dec. 2nd, 1935. Mrs. Ursula Roberts, B.A.

Squirrel's Heath, Romford, All Saints' Women's Fellowship, Dec. 5th, 1935. Mrs. Joyce Pollard.

Watford N.C.W., Dec. 6th, 1935. Mrs. Ursula Roberts, B.A.
Sutton, Cheam and District W.C.A., March 3rd, 1936. Mrs. Ursula Roberts, B.A.

Nottingham N.C.W. Luncheon, April 24th, 1936. Dr. Maude Royden, C.H., LL.D.

Other meetings on the ministry of women addressed by our speakers were:—

Liverpool, Evangelical Group Movement, March 5th, 1935. Dr. Maude Royden, C.H., LL.D.

Women's Freedom League, Jan. 15th and April 25th, 1935. Rev. Dorothea Belfield.

Open Door Council, March 28th, 1935. Miss Helen Ward and Rev. D. Belfield.

National Council for Equal Citizenship. Miss Helen Ward.

Two services at which our President has preached may be mentioned. On Easter Sunday, 1936, Dr. Maude Royden preached at the Evening Service at the (Anglican) English Church, The Hague, Holland, to a crowded audience of Dutch and English people. She wore her robes as Doctor of Divinity and sat in the Sanctuary. Dr. Royden preached at the Memorial Service to Miss Jane Addams at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London, on June 4th, when the Dean of Canterbury (Dr. Hewlett Johnson) officiated. Representatives of the Society for the Ministry of Women attended the Service.

THE SOCIETY'S PUBLICATIONS.

"*Special*" *Order or Holy Order*, by Dr. Maude Royden, C.H., price ½d. (1d. post free). *The Ministry of Women*, price ½d., by Dr. Royden. *A Pageant: Certain Women of Christ's Company*, by Dr. Royden, price 4d. (postage 1d.); *St. Paul and the Ministry of Women*, by Rev. A. E. N. Simms, M.A., B.D., price 2½d. post free; *Why forbid Us?* by Muriel Lester, price 2½d.; and *Spiritual Equality—the Fundamental Principle*, price 2½d. post free; Supplement to *The Coming Ministry* on Report of Archbishops' Commission, price 1½d. post free. *Note by the Dean of St. Paul's* appended to *Report of the Archbishops' Commission on the Ministry of Women*, price 2d., postage extra (reprinted by kind permission of the Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly).

PRESENT POSITION.

Anglican Church.

The Report of the Archbishops' Commission on the Ministry of Women was published on December 6th, 1935. The Commission was appointed to "examine any theological or other relevant principles which have governed or ought to govern the Church in the development of the Ministry of Women." The Commissioners object to the ordination of women to the priesthood, yet admit their inability to base their decision on theological principles. They recognise the diaconate for women as making the Deaconess "one of the Clergy," and as involving her admission to Holy Orders and her right to the title "Reverend." Her fitness to administer the chalice in Holy Communion is also conceded. The Report includes seven chapters dealing respectively with Historical, Theological, Practical, Psychological and Physiological Considerations, Deaconesses, Lay Workers, Secondary Schools and Universities; an appendix by Professor Grensted on Psychology and Physiology; and a note by the Dean of St. Paul's (Dr. W. R. Matthews). This note is the most valuable part of the whole Report. Dr. Matthews says: "The Christian

Ministry must be a 'Ministry of the word and sacraments,' and no development of the ministry of women which excluded the possibility of a woman celebrating the Eucharist could be justly regarded as placing women on the same level as men." And further, "I am in agreement with the majority of the Commission in thinking that the arguments against the inherent capacity of women to be ordained priests are unconvincing. I wish, however, to go further. They seem to me to be worthless." Dr. Matthews maintains that "there is a most important theological principle which ought to lead us to the conclusion that the opening of the full ministry of the Church to women is required" and refers to the fundamental Christian doctrine of "the supreme value of personality." "I do not believe," he says, "that we can accept the fact of the Church's traditional exclusion of women as the guidance of the Holy Spirit for our day." Dr. Matthews' note ends with the following words: ". . . the Ministry of the Church is so high and arduous a vocation that the full resources of humanity ought to be available for its fulfilment."

The Commission Report is further discussed on page 3 of this Report. The Society has reprinted the Note by the Dean of St. Paul's (by permission of the Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly) and it can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Miss Pryke, price 2d., postage ½d.

Baptist Church.

The principle that women are eligible for admission to the ministry is accepted in the Baptist Denomination, but no women have been admitted to the Colleges for some time. The Rev. Violet Hedger, B.D., LL.D. (Minister at Littleover from 1926-9), was in 1933 called to North Parade Baptist Church, Halifax, and the other two women ministers are doing good work in their respective spheres.

Congregational Church.

The Ministry of the Congregational Churches is open equally to men and women. Some of the Theological Colleges are open to women to take training for the Ministry.

The Congregational Union of Great Britain and Ireland has recognised the Ministry of Women by placing on their list of recognised Ministers those who have taken a full training and been called to a Church.

The Report of the Congregational Commission on the Ministry of Women, which was presented to the C.U. Council at Kettering in March, 1936, does not contain any very startling or progressive recommendations. Such were, perhaps, hardly to be expected from

a Commission which originally included only one laywoman* and at no time any woman minister at all.

After a brief review of women's work in very varied spheres of Church life, in evangelism and lay preaching, work in Sunday Schools and among young people, in administration and social and communal activities, there appears a rather vague recommendation of a scheme of training for a "small number of women, employed by the Union, to exercise an educative ministry among women and particularly among women leaders."

Next the Commission recommends that the Order of Deaconesses—hitherto greatly neglected in Congregationalism—should be officially constituted and recognised, presumably on Methodist rather than on Anglican lines.

There follows a brief reference to the extent, importance, and value of the work of women missionaries. Turning to the question of women ministers, the Report summarises its inquiry into the work of the seventeen women ordained since 1917. "The general impression is that on the whole the experience of these women has been a happy one, and that their ministry has proved effective and valuable. . . . But, on the other hand, there is general testimony to a widespread and strong unwillingness among the churches to consider a woman as candidate in a vacancy."

The Commission records the following convictions: "Despite the difficulties and disappointments which have been indicated, the measure of success which has attended the ministry of most of the women now ordained, excludes even the suggestion that the principle of the eligibility of women for the ministry in the Congregational churches should be challenged. Owing to the state of feeling and opinion in our churches, the difficulties and disappointments, however, are so great as to forbid the encouragement of women generally to enter the ministry at present; but where a woman has shown tried capacity for such service, has exceptional ability, and is so certain of her vocation that she is prepared to run all risks, it would not be right to put any obstacle in her path, and she would have a claim to all the necessary help. For it is only as women are able to prove their distinctive worth that any change of attitude and action by the churches can be expected."

With regard to the vexed question of the marriage of women ministers, the Commission states that "it does not seem desirable for a woman to continue in a pastorate after marriage as the claims of the pastorate would not seem to allow such discharge of the duties of the

* Two more women were added subsequently.

home as necessarily fall on a wife and mother. The new obligations need not, however, prevent a continuance of the ministry of preaching."

Methodist Church.

By a small majority the vote was carried against the admission of women to the ordained ministry, in the Methodist Conference in July, 1934. By a later resolution, however, the Pastoral Conference expressed its dissatisfaction with the present position and provided for the raising of the question again. The subject did not, however, come before the Conference in 1935, and is unlikely to be discussed at this year's Conference.

Presbyterian Church—England.

The Report of the Committee on Women and the Ministry was presented at the Assembly in May, 1935. The Assembly approved the findings of the Special Committee, which included (a) the acceptance by the Committee of the unanimous judgment of the Senatus that difficulties, at present insuperable, exist which prevent the acceptance of women as regular students at Westminster College; (b) that the foregoing does not in itself settle adversely the question of the admission of women to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, inasmuch as their training might be secured by the Church's acceptance of the course provided by the Theological Colleges of the Scottish and Irish Presbyterian Church or by some other means.

The Assembly then decided "to pass from the consideration of this subject for the present."

Unitarian Church.

Eight women ministers are in charge of churches. In addition one is co-pastor with her husband, one is District Minister in charge of two churches and supervising any others in the district that may be temporarily without a regular minister, another helps her husband unofficially, and one has been appointed as Assembly representative in the Khasi Hills. There is also a lay worker doing excellent work in a small church, who for health reasons has been unable to qualify as minister. One student expects to qualify this June and another has been accepted for training. Opportunities for training are available for a limited number at the Unitarian College, Manchester, and at Manchester College, Oxford.

Although no woman, as far as is known, has ever applied for admission, there is no technical obstacle in the way of a woman being accepted as a student at the undenominational college at Carmarthen,

known, on historic grounds, as the "Presbyterian College." This college is attended mainly by Welsh students for the Baptist, Congregationalist, and Unitarian Ministries.

Church of Scotland (Presbyterian).

The Committee appointed four years ago to consider the petition asking that women be made eligible for the diaconate, the eldership, and the Ministry submitted its Report to the General Assembly of 1934 and asked to be discharged by the Assembly as in their opinion no useful purpose could be served in proceeding to consideration of women in the Ministry when the eldership had been rejected by the Presbyteries. This was agreed to.

At the Meeting of General Assembly of the Church of Scotland held in Edinburgh in May, 1935, the Rev. Dr. R. S. Calderwood in presenting the report of the Committee on Christian Life and Work referred to the Order of Deaconesses, and asked the co-operation of Ministers in bringing the claims of the Order before members of the congregations. He said the Committee asked the Assembly to send down to Presbyteries for their opinion a proposal "that those who were Deaconesses, who had shown an aptitude for their work, those who had at least 5 years' experience, should within the bounds of the Presbytery within which they laboured be licensed to conduct occasional services." They were not to be used for ordinary supply, and the question of Ordination did not arise. During the winter Presbyteries have discussed the proposal and voted on it, some approving, and others disapproving. Their reports will no doubt come up at next Assembly.

United Free Church of Scotland (Presbyterian).

The principle that women are equally eligible with men for ordination was accepted by an almost unanimous vote when the United Free Church of Scotland was reorganised in 1929. In September, 1935, Rev. Edith S. Martin, M.Sc., B.D., was inducted to Balbeggie and Collace United Free Church, where she had been probationer in charge since 1934. The other minister of a congregation also in Perthshire is Rev. Elizabeth B. Barr, M.A., B.D. (at Auchterarder). Miss Christina P. Jarvie is studying at Glasgow University with a view to entering the Theological College, and is preaching with great acceptance throughout the churches. There are at least three women elders in the denomination, including Miss Annie Maclean, the general secretary of the United Free Church.

**SOCIETY FOR THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN
(INTERDENOMINATIONAL).**

Dr. Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March, 1936. Cr.

RECEIPTS.				PAYMENTS.						
				£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
To Cash at Bank and in Hand at 1st April, 1935 :—		£	s. d.							
At Bank	33	16	3	By Printing and Stationery :—			£	s. d.	£	s. d.
In Hand—Treasurer	1	4	0	<i>The Coming Ministry</i>			14	18	0	
	35	0	3	General			27	13	9	
<i>Less</i> —Cash overdrawn :—				„ Hire of Hall			42	11	9	
Secretary	9	17	5	„ Postage			2	6	0	
				„ Sundry Expenses			24	5	2	
„ Donations and Subscriptions			25 2 10	„ Literature for Sale			8	1	4	
„ Sale of Literature			77 6 0	„ Press Cuttings			2	2	0	
„ Affiliation Fees			5 10 6	„ Audit Fee			2	2	0	
„ Collections			10 0	„ Affiliation Fee			1	1	0	
			4 16 1	„ Cash at Bank and in Hand at 31st March, 1936 :—						
			£113 5 5	At Bank			26	9	4	
				In Hand—Unbanked... ..			2	16	0	
				Treasurer			8	4		
				Secretary			5	7		
							29	19	3	
							£113	5	5	

We have prepared the above Receipts and Payments Account from the Books and Vouchers of the Society for the Ministry of Women, and certify it to be in accordance therewith. We have verified the Balance of Cash at Bank by means of a certificate.

13/14 Dartmouth Street,
Westminster, S.W.1.

(Sgd.) E. WATTS & CO., Chartered Accountants,
Auditors.

14th April, 1936.

Society for the Ministry of Women

(Interdenominational)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

(a) PRESIDENT, VICE-PRESIDENTS, HON. SECRETARY,
HON. TREASURER (*ex officio*).

(See page 2 for names.)

(b) DENOMINATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES.

(Representing members of the Society who are members of the respective denominations.)

Anglican :

Mrs. Ursula Roberts, B.A. Mrs. Beatrice Powell.

Baptist :

Miss A. M. Duncan. Miss D. M. Gotch.

Congregational :

Rev. Joyce Rutherford, B.Sc. Rev. Doreen Hopewell, B.A., B.D.

Methodist :

Mr. A. E. Appelbe, M.A., LL.B. Miss A. E. Slack.

Presbyterian :

Miss Rosamond Clark.

Unitarian :

Rev. Rosalind Lee, M.A. Miss H. E. Hargrove.

(c) ELECTED MEMBERS.

Miss C. Shore.

Miss M. Shotter.

Dr. Eva Morton.

Mrs. Howard Lewis.

Mrs. Joyce Pollard.

Miss Carol Morrison, M.A.

Dr. Sybil Pratt.

Rev. D. Belfield.

Miss M. Gordon.