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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Should Women be admitted to the Priesthood ?

A PAPER READ BY MR. J. G. FARRER-MORGAN AT A CONFERENCE OF THE RURAL DEANERY OF NORTH MEOLS (SOUTHPORT).¹

“DEMOS” is now King in both Church and State, and any Churchman who refuses to recognize that fact is living in an unreal world, and is out of touch with the twentieth century. In my early years, the highest conception of the Church was an institution run on feudal lines by the parish priest and one or two of his well-to-do parishioners for the patronage and benefit—mainly eleemosynary—of the rest. That conception is not dead. It is not confined to these islands. It is rampant in the National Churches of Italy, Spain, and France, and is gradually eating away their Catholicity and reducing them to the level of sects. Some Churchmen think these churches are our goal for imitation. Their fate will certainly be ours, unless our Church recovers the democratic basis intended by her Founder.

I should like to say, parenthetically, that since I prepared this paper the bishops and priests of the Russo-Greek Church—officially the Church of the Orthodox Catholic Faith—have shown that they believe, what I have just been saying, that a National Church must be democratic or fall to pieces. The Metropolitans and Bishops, sixty-four in all, have given up their veto—votes by Orders are abolished. In the Ecclesiastical Council of all Russia, which governs all internal affairs of the Church, representative laymen preponderate. All sit together and have equal powers of voting—one man, be he Patriarch, Metropolitan, Bishop, priest, or layman, one vote. This composite Council is the ultimate Court of Appeal in faith, services, and ceremonies. The parochial franchise is in all adults, male and female, of twenty-five years of age, Conformist or Nonconformist, and they elect the clerical and lay representatives. Bear in mind that 30 per cent. of the population of Russia is admittedly Nonconformist. The Orthodox Greek Church is without doubt to-day the most—practically the only—democratic National Church in the world ; our own and the National Churches of Italy, Spain, and France are the reactionary churches of Christendom, and will all be blotted out as National Churches unless they quickly take the broad and intelligent view of the Orthodox bishops, priests, and laymen. If we wish to retain the proud position heretofore enjoyed of being the most liberal and enlightened Church in Christendom, we must reorganize ourselves on the lines of the Orthodox Church, and before anything can be done we must consign to the scrap heap the retrograde report of the Archbishops’ Committee.

¹ A Ruri-Decanal Conference for the North Meols Rural Deanery took place at Christ Church Parish Hall, Southport, on Tuesday, November 20, 1917, when there were present Canon Blakeney, Rural Dean (presiding), the Revs. F. W. Dwelly, F. Linton Parkyn, W. D. Walmsley, R. A. Marsh, J. Llewellyn, C. Wright, J. S. Crisall, R. Norwood, W. Carrington, N. Brereton, R. Gregory, J. B. Richardson, A. F. Ritchie, B. H. Watts, Messrs. J. G. Farrer-Morgan, W. Greaves Lord, J. J. Cockshott, J. E. Willett, J. P., Cicero Smith, J. P., S. R. Park, G. S. Packer, T. Phillips, W. Shuttleworth, T. Dean, A. Marchant, A. Coke, T. C. Clare-Kershaw, Dr. A. M. Edge, W. S. Lomas, Geo. Haslam, T. B. Jones, W. Ryding, John Humpherys and the Rev. R. Sinker (hon. secretary). After Mr. Farrer-Morgan had read the paper, now reproduced in the CHURCHMAN, there was an interesting discussion in which both clergy and laity took part. It was proposed by the Rev. F. W. Dwelly, M.A., and seconded by the Rev. R. Norwood, M.A., and carried: “That this Ruri-Decanal Conference can find no principle which would debar womanhood from exercising the office of the priesthood of the Church.” There were seven dissentients, all laymen.

CANON LAW AND THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN.

The language used by earnest Churchpeople has to be considerably discounted. In matters of controversy their sound and fury are, generally, in inverse proportion to the intrinsic merits of the matter. In the controversies of my time I remember "Apostate Church," "Cast out of the Holy Catholic Church," "Regenade Church," and other similar choice gems of rhetoric applied by militant Churchmen to their own Church if it did this or refrained from doing that. Nothing so dreadful has, however, happened, nor will it happen, if Churchmen are true to their ideals and their privileges. History, however, repeats itself. The very limited permission proposed to be given by the Bishops of London and Chelmsford sanctioning, during the late Mission, instruction within consecrated buildings by women, to women and girls, raised a perfect hurricane of wild and incoherent talk, both spoken and written. The threat by some priests and laymen to boycott the Mission frightened the two Bishops, and they withdrew their limited permission. In the course of this paper I shall have to consider whether the two Bishops were right or wrong in their action. I agree, of course, that their action raises—or may be held to raise—a question of principle much wider and more extensive than that involved in their limited permission. I shall attempt to deal with the question on its broader basis, viz.: Should women be admitted to the priesthood, as claimed by the feminalist organizations, on the ground of the absolute equality of the sexes? The question of principle involved is: Did Our Lord intend His Church to be an exclusively man-served and man-administered Church for all time? Admittedly the ecclesiastical laws of our own Church, and the Churches of the East and West, only provide for the public ministry of men in the Holy Catholic Church. The Canon law, and the rules and regulations of the Holy Catholic Church, are exclusively the work of man—women, forming considerably more than half of the baptized members of the Church, had no part, or lot, in their formation. If the disability of women is divine, that fact is immaterial. On the other hand, if the disability is of man's creation, then their having no voice is of importance. Some Churchmen say the Canon law and the ecclesiastical rules and regulations are, for the most part, the product of General Councils, guided by the Holy Ghost, and must be accepted without question as reflecting the mind of our Lord. History shows that position is quite untenable, and our 21st Article most truly says General Councils have erred, and may err, even in things pertaining unto God. The fact that the Canon law and the ecclesiastical rules and regulations do not provide for the ministry of women is not, in itself, conclusive either way. Let us get down to bedrock principles. The real question is: Is the priesthood of women incompatible with the teaching of Our Lord? Mr. Gladstone, in discussing Vaticanism, most truly said that whether it was right, or wrong, could only be decided by whether Vaticanism had, or had not, behind it "the irrefragable"—or, as he otherwise called it, "the impregnable—rock of Holy Scripture." The sole question for your consideration and mine as loyal members of our beloved Church, is whether the exclusion of women from the offices of our Church is supported by the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture.

WOMEN THE SAME SPIRITUAL VALUE AS MEN.

In the eye of Our Lord it is a truism to say the woman is of the same spiritual value as the man, is capable of being the recipient of the same spiritual gifts, and is in no way inferior to the male, just as baptized believers of the negro, or other coloured races, are in His eye of the same spiritual value as

baptized believers of the white races, however cultured and civilized those white races may be—a position which the white races, for the most part, wholly and most unjustifiably decline to concede to them. It is most shocking to me that English Churchpeople decline to communicate at the same altar as coloured communicants, or, if they can help it, worship in the same church. Such people are ignorant of the rudiments of their faith, however much they may plume themselves on their good Churchmanship. In a noble passage St. Paul sums up the teaching of Our Lord thus:—"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew, nor Greek, neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 27-28).¹ If there ever were an utterance breathing the Spirit of God, in every syllable, it is this.

It is the Magna Charta of the Church, applicable to all peoples, for all ages, dominating, over-riding, and subordinating every canon, rule, and regulation of the Church. (When I speak of Magna Charta throughout this paper, I mean this summary of St. Paul.) I can find no disability of women for the priesthood in the teaching of Our Lord, thus summarized by St. Paul. The argument of some Churchmen is, that nothing would have been easier for Our Lord, if He had so wished, to include women in the Apostolic College, and as He did not do so there is no room for discussion. I do not think so. Perhaps by the sane reasoning nothing would have been easier for Our Lord than to have condemned and abolished slavery; but when He was on earth He knew the time was not ripe for either. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." When the fullness of time came He sent forth men in His name both to condemn and abolish slavery; and we of the later generation recognize that it was the Lord's doing. So it is my faith that the fullness of the time has come and the Lord has raised up those who condemn, and would abolish, the bonds which keep women from exercising their priesthood. Only let the Churchmen of to-day recognize the fullness of the time, and after generations shall say of us what we say of Wilberforce and his colleagues, "It is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes." Some Churchmen aver that Magna Charta does not mean what it says as to the equality of the sexes, because the same Apostle, in giving some directions to the Church of Corinth as to the seemliness of public worship, said: "Let your women keep silence in the Churches," and "It is shameful for a woman to speak in the Church" (1 Cor. xiv. 34-35), and to the Church of Ephesus, "But I suffer not a woman to teach" (1 Tim. ii. 12). These Churchmen say these directions to the Churches of Corinth and Ephesus must be read into Magna Charta, and the spiritual equality of women with men only applies when women hold their tongues!

THE PAULINE TRADITION AND THE CHURCH'S MAGNA CHARTA.

I proceed to give my reasons for stating that the Pauline tradition does not qualify Magna Charta in any way in the twentieth century. It is an axiom, in interpreting the regulations of the State, that one must ascertain the mischief which the statute seeks to remedy. The effect of these purely personal directions of St. Paul to the Churches of Corinth and Ephesus must be judged by the state of things in these churches at the time St. Paul gave the directions. It may well be, that read in the light of that state of things,

¹ My quotation is from the Authorized Version; the R.V. is:—"There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female, for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus." Dr. Moffat, Yates Professor of New Testament Greek and Exegesis, 1916:—"There is no room for . . . male and female, you are all one in Christ Jesus."

St. Paul was dealing (as most probably he was at Corinth) with a set of chattering, talkative women who upset by their interruptions the decency he so much desired in Divine worship. Put at their very highest, these Apostolical directions of St. Paul are directions binding, no doubt, on the churches to which they were addressed, and which were under his supervision, but necessarily binding outside those particular churches. They amount to no more than if, at the present time, a Bishop of the Holy Catholic Church gave an injunction, quite within his competence, to the priests of his diocese to do a certain thing; the priests of another diocese would be under no obligation to perform that thing. The fact that the directions are included in the Sacred Canon does not, it seems to me, make any difference. As soon as one is satisfied the directions were called forth by the local circumstances and needs of the times, one is justified in treating them as local and temporary. Whatever may be their true meaning and effect, what is clear to me is, that they do not mean what the tradition of the Catholic Church has, almost throughout, held them to mean, because the same Apostle, writing to the same Church of Corinth, in 1 Corinthians xi. 4, 5, said: "Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonoureth his head; but every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoureth her head." St. Paul obviously contemplated women praying and preaching in public. Further, we learn from Acts xxi. 9, that St. Paul was a guest in the house of St. Philip the Evangelist, "who had four daughters which did prophesy." Whether he liked it or not, St. Paul would have had to listen to women preaching during that visit. I reject entirely the allegation that the prophesying of women was limited to those individuals who were recipients of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It is a mere assertion, without, as far as I can see, an atom of proof. An inspired pronouncement of general and universal application is, necessarily, of greater importance than a similar pronouncement of only local and limited application, and to let the local and limited override the general and universal is to violate perspective and to lose all sense of proportion. The Pauline tradition seems to have obsessed the minds of the rulers of the Church throughout the ages, probably because they recognized in it a ready means of keeping the power and privileges in their own hands. Some theologians are, of late, unhappy in their minds as to whether they are right in saying that Magna Charta is cut down by the Pauline tradition, and have expended much printers' ink in attempting to satisfy their readers that St. Paul cannot have intended, in Magna Charta, to contradict the tradition. Such special pleading does not carry any conviction to my mind. I reject all such casuistry. The "minor" cannot control and overrule the "major." Magna Charta holds the field, and the baptized woman is capable of holding the same office as the baptized man, providing each is, as the Apostle says, "in Christ Jesus."

DEACONESSES IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

It is instructive to note that quite early in the Christian Church, deaconesses were a recognized order of female ministers. In Murray's *New English Dictionary of Historical Principles*, 1897, Vol. 3, page 57, it is stated that, ecclesiastically, deaconess is the name of an order of women in the early Church who appear to have undertaken duties in reference to their own sex, analogous to those performed by the deacons among men, citing the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* as the authority. The later, and particularly the mediaeval authorities, do not put the duties of deaconesses higher than the care of children, visiting the sick, and attending women

at baptisms. St. Paul himself, in Romans xvi. 1, commends Phoebe to the Church in Rome as a diakonon—deaconess—of the Church that is in Cenchrea.¹ Although preaching is not one of the duties of the diaconate mentioned in Acts vi. 1-7, yet it is known that some of the seven, notably SS. Stephen and Philip, were great preachers, and preaching was part of their regular work in the Church. If that were so in the male diaconate, it is not a very violent assumption that it was so also in the female diaconate. The order of deaconesses continued in the primitive Church as a recognized part of the Church's ministrations during the early centuries, the Western Church discontinuing such order about the seventh century, and the Eastern Church about the thirteenth century. It is clear that from Apostolic, and sub-Apostolic times onwards, the ministrations of women in public worship were for many centuries recognized by the whole Church. For many centuries such ministrations have been abandoned by the Universal Church. Baptism by women midwives, in cases of necessity, has, however, always been recognized, and in reply to the Puritans in 1584, Archbishop Whitgift said that the baptism of even women is lawful and good "so that the institution of Christ touching the word and element is duly used," and he adds that no learned man ever doubted such was the case (Phillimore, 1872, page 42). The Bishops of London and Chelmsford were vituperated as uncatholic for reverting to a practice of the universal Church for the first seven centuries, and one had to listen to and read columns of ill-digested stuff, spoken and written, by men who had not taken the trouble to inform themselves before they entered into the fray. The only fault I find with the Bishops was giving way to such ill-instructed clamour. Apart from the limited recognition of women in the Order of Deaconesses, it is very curious to note the treatment accorded to women by the Church. One section of the Holy Catholic Church, whilst it deified woman in the person of the Blessed Virgin, and glorified those who voluntarily selected the vocation of virginity, at the same time refused to women—because they were women—any open or conspicuous part in the conduct of public worship, however saintly and otherwise well qualified they might be. Evidently the authorities of the Church of Rome chose to regard the admonitory directions of St. Paul to the Churches of Corinth and Ephesus as Pontifical utterances, binding for all time. The attitude of our own Reformers was very much the same. After the teaching of Our Lord had been promulgated by man in his own unfettered discretion, and under his exclusive management, for fifteen to sixteen centuries, the general position of women was never lower than at the time of the Reformation. As far as I can see the Reformers never raised a little finger to improve it. In fact, in the religions of classic antiquity, long before the Christian era, women occupied, in many points, a position of more unqualified honour than in the Middle Ages.

Whilst I fully admit that women are indebted to Christianity for many advantages, yet the other side of the picture, I feel strongly, is that the teach-

¹ The Bishop of Oxford, in his book on *The Church and the Ministry*, says, page 230: St. Paul recognizes a ministry of women in the Church in Romans xvi. 1. But it is a ministry which is concerned with works of mercy, and, if with teaching also, only in private. The excellent Greek Scholars among the women say that Dr. Gore has sacrificed his scholarship to his prejudices in favour of the tradition. They point out that the Greek word in Romans xvi. 1, and in the A.R.V. translated servant is precisely the same as in 1 Corinthians iii. 5, where it is translated "minister" as applicable to Apollos and the general body of ordained men, and in 2 Corinthians vi. 4, where it is translated minister in relation to St. Paul's own office. They say bluntly to Dr. Gore that if his comment on Romans xvi. 1 is right, then the work of the general body of ordained ministers and the work of St. Paul and his successors in office must be a ministry which is concerned with works of mercy, and, if with teaching also, only with teaching in private. I leave Dr. Gore to get out of the dilemma into which the women Greek scholars have put him.

ing of the Church inculcating the submission and subordination of women has gone too far, and placed obstacles in the way of their full spiritual and mental development. The true view, it seems to me, is that Christianity, so far as women are concerned, has exerted an influence in two opposing directions. As the religion of the oppressed, the Gospel of suffering and pity, Christianity especially recognized women, sanctifying some of the most typically feminine emotions. On the other hand, from its ascetic side, Christianity has been actively hostile to women, shutting them up, as far as they could, in cloisters, as the peculiar representatives of sexuality, giving them, it is true, in such cloisters, modified careers of usefulness in ameliorating the sufferings of humanity.¹

STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE COMMONWEALTH.

It is perfectly clear to me that we must all revise the opinions most of us held up to, say, five years ago, about the status of women in the Commonwealth, civil and ecclesiastical. It is stated that the Archbishops and Bishops have sent back to the Committee their report, about which Canon Inskip spoke to us lately, for rectification as far as women are concerned. At the next general election we shall have six million women voters. Women members of Parliament and women Cabinet Ministers must of necessity follow. What physiologists used to say—before physiology became an exact science—about the smallness of the female brain, is contradicted by the experience of most of us. I have been meeting, at various times, for many years—thirty at least—women whose intellectuality is of the highest order, certainly not inferior to that of any man I have ever met. They have attained that position by sheer solid brain work, and, having attained it, they will find an outlet for their mental powers somewhere. If the Church does not utilize their services they will become non-Church, to the great detriment of the Church. It seems to me that during the last fifty years, whilst men of all classes in this country, generally speaking, have led the lives of Pagans, women, also speaking generally, have kept alive Christianity in our land, and if, by our fatuous folly, we drive the educated and qualified women into the other camp, the candlestick will be removed from our Church. Most women have, intuitively, the gift or art of imparting instruction. It is sheer folly not to utilize this gift of the Almighty to women for the extension of God's Kingdom. I am not so foolish as to say that every woman possesses this gift, or that every woman is fit for the teaching office. What I mean is, that those who possess the gift, and are otherwise qualified, should be eligible. I am tired of hearing the parrot cry of the tradition of the Church for 2,000 years forbidding women teaching or preaching in Church. Every instructed Churchman values the office of tradition. I freely acknowledge the service rendered to the Church in the past by tradition, and the help it has been in solving the difficulties constantly cropping up in the every-day work of the Church; that useful office will continue for all time. Tradition, however, must be assigned its proper place. Whenever tradition points in one direction and revelation in another; whenever tradition does not rest on the "Impregnable rock of Holy Scripture," then tradition, whether of 50 or 2,000 years, must give way, or we ourselves shall be guilty of the Master's

¹ My authorities for the treatment accorded to women by the Church and their condition in the Middle Ages are the following:—*Womenkind in Western Europe*, by T. Wright. *Women's Share in Primitive Culture*, by Otis Mason. *Woman Under Monasticism*, by Eckenstein. *Man and Woman*, by Havelock Ellis. *The Woman Question in Europe*, by Theodora Stanton. *The International Council of Women*, by Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, 1904.

condemnation : " Ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition " (Mark vii. 9).¹

TRADITIONS THAT HAVE FALLEN INTO DISUSE.

The traditions of a National Church, or of the Universal Church, may be proved to be based upon a misconception, mistranslation, or misreading of God's Word. It is perfectly shocking to me that, under such circumstances, the tradition is to stand for all time, because so many generations of Churchmen have believed and acted on it. That is respect for antiquity run mad. There are several instances of matters allowed in Scripture, and appointed by the Apostles, which have been permitted by our, and other, National Churches to fall into disuse, e.g., all women must be veiled at public worship, prohibition of men wearing their headgear whilst worshipping, the Agape Feast of Love, abstaining from meats offered to idols, abstaining from blood and from things strangled, the precept of St. James as to the anointing of the sick, and some of the ceremonies of baptism, are all now, for the most part, treated as dead letters.² The judicious Hooker says : " Where things have been instituted, which being convenient and good at the first, had afterwards in process of time waxed otherwise, we make no doubt but they may be altered ; yea, though Councils and customs generally have received them." ³ There is a very striking, but rather long passage in the preface to the Prayer Book to the same effect. The Catholic Hierarchy throughout seems to have surrounded the Pauline tradition with a special halo of sanctity, differentiating it from the other Apostolical directions to which I have referred, which they have dropped or varied according to their own sweet will. For instance, they have sanctioned the wearing in Divine worship of Mitres and Birettas, thereby trampling on St. Paul and his views. Perhaps, their tenderness and veneration for this particular Pauline tradition enforcing silence on women is based upon a wholesome fear that their flocks would receive more spiritual illumination than they could bear if they did not keep all holy, gifted women out of the teaching office. I wonder whether the flocks thank their fathers in God for this tender solicitude. I do not think they do. I ask more particularly the laymen of this Rural Deanery to put aside all preconceived notions and prejudices and look into this question of the ministry of women calmly, dispassionately, and prayerfully. The sole question is : Are women disqualified, by revelation, for the priesthood ? For the reasons I have given, I hold they are not. A well-known residentiary Canon of another diocese, a man of high academical distinction, wrote to me some time ago that he was in agreement with the views I have expressed in this paper—that it was a layman's question, and that laymen must help the clergy to arrive at a right conclusion on this and other burning questions. The clergy themselves, he added, " were so hidebound with the opinions of their predecessors, and so autocratic in stating those opinions, that they needed the unprejudiced minds of the laity to guide the Church to a right conclusion. Though linked together, there are really two parts of this question, viz. : Authority to preach, and the priesthood. As I have said already, the Bishops of London and Chelmsford were, in my opinion, strictly catholic in following the practice of the Universal Church for the first seven centuries. Their

¹ The mind of our Church is perfectly clear, see Article 34 on Tradition : " Nothing be ordained against God's Word."

² My authority is the celebrated Church Divine, Thorndike, quoted by Dean of Arches Church Congress, 1901.

³ Hooker adds : " For there is not any positive law of man, whether it be general or particular received by formal express consent as in Councils or by secret approbation as in customs it cometh to pass but the same may be taken away if occasion serve."

own inherent authority as Bishops of the Catholic Church sufficed. The larger question of the priesthood for women is on quite a different footing, and requires corporate action of the Church before it could be adopted. The action of individual Bishops would not suffice.

THE WAR AND THE CHURCH'S FAILURE.

When this terrible war is over there will be such a dearth of men that, in my opinion, all branches of the Holy Catholic Church will be under compulsion to reconsider the whole question. My desire is that our branch should be the pioneer, and that is why I want all Churchmen now to consider and thrash out the question in all its bearings. It is computed that there are over five hundred millions of people professing and calling themselves Christians, and approaching one thousand millions non-Christians, involved in the present war—a sad commentary on the utter failure of the Universal Church to inculcate the principles of her Master. The Pope, Patriarch, and every Catholic Archbishop, Bishop, and Priest, together with all of us laymen who value and exercise our priesthood, should be on his knees, confessing and deploring, in dust and ashes, the ghastly failure of his work for Our Lord. Judging from the reports of Convocation, and the religious newspapers, the Archbishops, Bishops, and Priests of our branch of the Church Catholic are quite satisfied with themselves and the excellence, in their own opinion, of their work, and quite oblivious of the Paganism stalking through our land and through Europe, are spending their time in the utterly useless attempt to put down prayers for the dead, in discussing the saintliness or otherwise of Charles I, and in squabbling about rubrics, postures, and vestments, and other similar utterly trivial things. The human side of the Universal Church, solely organized and administered by man—for nearly 2,000 years—has been a colossal failure in every country in Europe, emphatically so in our own. Our National Church, and all Christian bodies combined, have a hold on only one in ten of the adult males of this country; the remainder are either hostile or totally indifferent to all religious influences.

Those figures were given in the public Press from an authoritative Church source with means of knowledge, and I believe are approximately correct ("Artifex," in *Manchester Guardian* November 15, 1917). I ask you to allow your minds to grip them. In the twentieth century of the Christian era in this country, one only in every ten adult males has been reached and held by all Christian agencies combined; in other words, ninety per cent. of our manhood repudiate all forms of organized Christianity.

"Colossal failure" very inadequately describes what I feel.¹

I wonder, and I would most solemnly ask you, is it because we have refused freedom to the complete man? "Male and female created He them

¹ Numbers, especially of Communions, are not a very satisfactory test of real spiritual work. Sometimes, however, numbers have a value, and I feel justified in using the following to enforce the thesis in the text:—The total population in England and Wales is, roughly, 36,200,000—36½ millions. Seventy per cent. of the children born in England every year are baptized in the Church of England. Seventy per cent. of our soldiers on mobilization declare themselves members of the Church of England, except in Wales, where the Bishop of St. Asaph states it is 82 per cent. I think, therefore, we may infer that 70 per cent. of the families of our population claim for themselves and for their children membership of the Church. That gives a little over 25½ millions of Churchpeople. Communicants between the ages of 12 and 65 should be approximately 8½ to 9 millions. Lord Wolmer, in *The Times* of October 8, 1917, stated that a surer method was to take the aggregate of the annual numbers of Confirmees. These, from 1867 to 1911, he made 8,587,379, a little over 8½ millions, reckoning only Confirmees of 21 years of age up to 65 years of age. I don't think it is far wrong to take 9 millions as the figure of potential Communicants from the age of 12 upwards. The actual Communicants from 12 years upwards at Easter, the Queen of Festivals, 1916, were 2,337,000, a fraction over 25 per cent. The figures should be studied by all Church dignitaries, parish and assistant priests.

in the image of God." The principles of Christianity have not failed, and will never fail. What has failed is man's conception of those principles and man's method of presenting them to an unbelieving world. Holy, gifted, spiritualized women have often a fuller and truer grasp of those principles in all their many-sidedness. I claim that by excluding such women there has been a quite unnecessary limitation to the opportunity for the expression of the spirit of God. I see the finger of God in this movement for admitting women into the offices of the Church. I say let us admit them. The state of things throughout Christendom is appalling, and cannot possibly be worse than it is to-day. When people, priests, and laymen appear painfully shocked, we will say with Old Gamaliel: "If this movement be of the earth, earthy, it will die; but if it be from Heaven, who are ye, that ye should presume to fight against God?"

