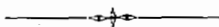


parish, not a rich one, raised its contribution to a curate's stipend from £100 to £140, on the condition that the incumbent should find them a university man. Is it not probable that a like increase of liberality will be shown by the laity of the Church at large, if they are assured that they will always have in return, not necessarily university men, but teachers to whose piety, learning, and judgment they can look up with confidence and respect? Such teachers they have already, for the most part. No one can deny the devotion and ability of the great body of the clergy. But there is an element of weakness. That element ought to be reduced.

EDW. R. BERNARD.



ART. II.—BIBLICAL ASPECTS OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN.¹

HAVING before me in prospect the duty which I am now about to try to discharge, and feeling seriously all the responsibility of the occasion, I determined to limit myself to the ground of the New Testament. When we are thinking of religious subjects, we find no freshness like the freshness of the Holy Scriptures. Whatever other streams of spiritual help there may be, for instruction, for edification, and for comfort—and there are many, and very precious—"behold," when we have the Bible close at our side, "we stand by the well of water." And there is another reason for this limitation. We stand thus on the ground of safety. We cannot conceal from ourselves that there are many difficulties connected with this subject of the Ministry of Women in the Church. This is not the moment for the discussion of such difficulties; and, after all, they are, for the most part, either personal on the one hand, or ecclesiastical on the other. They are not Biblical difficulties. In this respect, as in others, we are conscious of the value of the truth that is set before us in the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, "Thy Word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Thus I believe I cannot make a mistake if I select three illustrations of the religious ministry of women from the

¹ This address was delivered on the occasion of a meeting of Deaconesses at Farnham Castle on Thursday, July 26th, 1883.

Gospels, three from the Acts of the Apostles, and three from the Epistles. In this way we shall be travelling in the footsteps of our Lord and His immediate followers. The symmetry too may be, for some of us, a help to the memory, while it will certainly remind us of the wide diffusion of this topic through the Scriptures of the New Testament.

I.—(1) On the very threshold of the Gospel history, and in the midst of those sacred canticles which we use in our public worship, we meet with an illustrative example which is full of meaning. At the time of our Saviour's first presentation in the Temple, at the moment of the uttering of the *Nunc Dimittis*, we find a man and a woman alike in readiness. Each sex is represented on equal terms. Even this bare fact is very significant. The Gospel History tells us without delay of the high dignity to which woman has been raised, while at the same time we are conscious of the utmost tenderness of feeling in this picture of Anna's long-continued sorrow.

She had waited many years. Her example is an example of patience. And yet she exhibits, too, for our benefit, another side of character in close union with this. After the mention of her "giving of thanks in like manner with Simeon," it is said immediately that she "spoke of the Lord to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Doubtless she knew them well. During those long years of waiting she must have become acquainted with many whose desires and hopes were like her own. And they must often have "spoken together, while the Lord hearkened and heard." Now she loses not a moment in proclaiming the good news, and in gladdening those hearts. It might be truly said that Anna was the first Christian Evangelist, the first Christian Missionary. It is this combination of alacrity with patience which constitutes her so admirable an example of the Deaconess-spirit.

This instance receives some additional force when we remember that Anna was "of the tribe of Assher,"—a tribe of no fame and distinction, but, on the contrary, a somewhat ignoble and subordinate tribe. It is hardly mentioned at all in Hebrew history. Hardly any person is named as belonging to it, except in mere lists of genealogy. But the incident which we have before us here raises this tribe to an honour almost equal to that of any of the rest. And we ought to carry this thought with us into the reading of the Book of Revelation, where, amid the hundred and forty-four thousand of "the servants of our God," no difference among the tribes is made, but "of the tribe of Assher were sealed twelve thousand."

(2) Activity and patience are again visibly side by side when the examples of Martha and Mary are before us. Not, how-

ever, in this instance, combined in the same person; and one lesson of that eleventh chapter of St. John's Gospel is this, that they ought to be so combined. But such instruction has very often been drawn from this passage, and I will turn to other aspects of this scene at Bethany.

We cannot fail to observe in the first place how great a portion the scene occupies in this section of the Evangelic history. We feel that it is characteristic of the fourth Gospel; and herein it has done much to raise to its proper level our estimate of the high place of woman in the Christian Church.

But another point to be well marked is the discipline of sorrow in the experience of this family of Bethany. Anna, of whom we have already been thinking, had this discipline in one way. Martha and Mary had it in another. If there is to be a system of deaconesses pervading the Church of England—as I expect there will be, when some of us are in our graves—some of the best strength of this system will be supplied by those who have suffered much, and who through sanctified suffering have learnt to speak words of wisdom and moderation, and to exercise a sober controlling influence on others who are too vehement and eager.

And once more, Bethany admonishes us of the sacredness of domestic life. In the suggestions regarding the Ministry of Women, which the New Testament provides, there is nothing monastic. Some conclusions in this direction might possibly, with ingenuity, be drawn from what is said in the Acts of the Apostles concerning Philip's daughters, and from a remark concerning the official "widows" in one of the Pastoral Epistles. But I do not think that inferences of this kind amount to much; whereas the inculcation in the New Testament, directly and indirectly, of the sacredness of domestic life, amounts to very much indeed; and the Divine blessing could not confidently be expected if a system of deaconesses in the Church were organized in forgetfulness of this truth.

(3) We turn now to another of the four Gospels, and to a very different illustration of the service of women in the cause of Christ. This is the description given, in more places than one, of the Galilean women; and we observe that it is given by that Evangelist whose Gospel is marked by such sympathetic reference to women, especially widows.

Why such high honour should have been assigned to Galilee in the first planting of the Gospel upon this earth, we may not be able fully to explain—though some true parts of the explanation might perhaps easily be furnished. Here I refer simply to the fact, which is undoubted. Alike at the beginning and at the end of the sacred history of Christ, Galilee was chosen as the consecrated place of holy teaching and wondrous miracles,

and as the starting-point for all the future history of the Church. The loving associations of the first days seem to have been renewed after the Resurrection. But the point before our notice now is that this general glory of Galilee is expressly connected with women. Both early and late we see Galilean women "ministering" to Jesus.

And this word "ministering" leads to another remark which deserves consideration. It is, in the original, the very word from whence is derived the designation of the office which gives occasion to a meeting of deaconesses. It expresses all that helping, loving service, which has been so great a blessing to the world, age after age. On several occasions the word is used in this connection. For instance, St. Mark uses it to say of the women at the Cross, that "when Jesus was in Galilee they had followed Him and ministered to Him." Thus we seem to have here the consecration of an ecclesiastical term very full of meaning.

But the remembrance of these Galilean women must carry us to a point beyond mere local and verbal questions. Their lavish self-sacrifice, their endurance of fatigue, their forgetfulness of danger—all this is characteristic of the devotion of women. We see this alike during the early days in Galilee and at the Saviour's tomb at Jerusalem. They make no calculation of consequences. They disregard all difficulties. Such zeal is very beautiful, very inspiring. It often secures success, when mere prudence would fail; and it kindles the zeal of others, so that they accomplish what they thought impossible.

II.—(1) In the early part of the Apostolic history we are taken, while following this line of thought, to another part of the Holy Land. English travellers to that land commonly disembark at Joppa and proceed to Lydda. St. Peter's route between these two places was in the opposite direction. What is described as taking place at Joppa on his arrival from Lydda deserves our most careful attention. The mere fact that the story of Dorcas is recorded is important, and we should mark the place which it occupies, between the account of the conversion of St. Paul on the one hand, and the account of the conversion of Cornelius on the other. It is as if the sacred narrative paused in its stately march for the sake of this quiet lesson of beneficence; even as the Lord Jesus, when He was on one of His public errands of mercy, paused for the healing and blessing of a solitary sufferer by the way.

The name of Dorcas itself seems to bring the scene very closely in contact with our commonest experience. And such conscious contact with the Bible History is a great advantage.

It elevates our simple deeds of benevolence, when we see that such deeds were even honoured by a miracle.

But at this point a thought occurs to me, to which I cannot help giving expression. Who were those "widows" that stood by weeping when Peter entered the chamber of the dead? When Dorcas was restored to life, it is said that "he called the saints and widows." Were not these widows saints? Were they not Christians? It seems as if some distinction were drawn between them and the other saints or Christians. What if we have here the germ of that ministry of official "widows," which, as we know from the Pastoral Epistles, was afterwards more fully developed and organized? And these suggestions lead our thoughts to a further point. Who were those "widows" that were "neglected in the daily ministrations," so that murmuring on their account led to the appointment of St. Stephen and his six companions? I confess I would rather believe that they were women appointed to the task of distributing alms than that they were complaining recipients of alms. If these things were so, the earliest ministry in the Church would be a Ministry of Women. I will not dogmatize regarding that which can be only conjecture. But this at least is remarkable (and it is not foreign to our subject), that it is Philanthropy in the midst of which the first notices of the Christian Ministry occur. And this is the case not only with regard to the deacons, but the presbyters also; for the first mention of them is simply this: "The disciples at Antioch determined to send relief to their brethren in Judea, which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." Philanthropy is the very mission of the deaconess: and it is an encouragement to her to see it thus treated in Scripture with the highest honour.

(2) We now turn to places which are far from Palestine, and are in different parts of the missionary journeys of St. Paul. Of the church at Philippi it has often been remarked that the presence of women in connection with it is made very prominent. This topic will be mentioned again when occasion arises for the quoting of that Epistle to the Philippians which was written very long after St. Paul's earliest visit to Macedonia. But that earliest visit is full of suggestion for our present thoughts.

And first let us call to mind that this is the first introduction of Christianity into Europe. The arrival at Philippi is a step of the most momentous kind in the progress of the Gospel. Is it not a notable fact that the first encouragement came from a small company of women? It seems as if everywhere in the inspired record women were set before us—very

modestly indeed, yet very decisively—in a high position of opportunity and usefulness for the evangelization of the world.

Let us observe very carefully the extreme simplicity and quietness of this meeting of Lydia and her companions by the river-side. Nothing could be more unobtrusive. Yet from this small commencement spread that vast spiritual power which subdued our continent, which caused a revolution in human thought, which commanded kings, which tamed barbarians, which raised the oppressed, and which has descended in blessing even to our times. Surely this is an admonition to us—an admonition we sorely need—not to despise small beginnings.

Above all we must remember that it was in prayer that this evangelization of Europe began: and it is in prayer that this evangelization must continue. It is prayer which is the best feature of a meeting of deaconesses.

(3) There seems no imperative reason for imagining that Dorcas and Lydia were women of great powers or striking character. They may, for anything we know, have been persons of very average ability. We can, however, as it seems to me, hardly say this of Priscilla. The manner in which she is mentioned appears to give the impression that she was a woman of more than ordinary gifts, with a vigorous power of exerting influence over others. We find her conspicuous in three separate places, widely distant from one another—Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome. We find her generous in hospitality. "The Church in their house" is a phrase which belongs pre-eminently to Aquila and Priscilla. "All the Churches of the Gentiles" are spoken of as their debtors. In some way, perhaps on more occasions than one, they had exposed themselves to signal danger on behalf of St. Paul. Above all we find Priscilla as the instructor of a highly gifted young man, so that under her he became better fitted to teach the Gospel to others.

Now on this two remarks must be made. This devoted woman probably did in many other instances what she did in the instances recorded. We cannot too carefully remember that in the New Testament we have only fragments of biography, and that in such a case as this we have merely samples of a wide range of successful work. Hence the duty of studying very carefully what is so full of suggestion.

But further, we must call to mind that domestic life among the Greeks was very secluded. Hence the case of Priscilla introduces us to the Missionary aspect of feminine service. She is seen at work, as it were, in the zenanas of the ancient world. What is wanted now was wanted then. She was the forerunner of many women of great power and deep devotion,

who have lived since ; and great is the blessing to the Church and to the world, when such "a mother in Israel" is granted to live among us.

III. (1) The Bishop of Durham has remarked, in his recent Charge, that, according to the word of Scripture, Phœbe has as full a right to be termed a "deacon" as have Stephen and Philip. But, in fact, the case might with truth have been stated much more strongly ; for neither Stephen nor Philip is ever designated as a "deacon," whereas Phœbe is distinctly so designated. In fact, she is the only person in the New Testament who appears by name under this designation (Rom. xvi. 1, 2). She is spoken of in exactly the language which we find to be customary in the ages that immediately succeeded the Apostolic time. There we find the "man-deacon" and the "woman-deacon" as co-ordinate members of the same general ministry. The same word served for both ; and wherever we find correspondence between the language of early Church-History and the language of the New Testament, our reverent attention is urgently claimed.

In St. Paul's manner of mentioning Phœbe there is a warm personal feeling which indicates the recollection of some service rendered to himself : "She hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." Now Phœbe was "a deaconess of the Church of Cenchræe ;" and we find that Paul, at a previous time, had bound himself, according to an old Jewish custom, by a Nazarite vow at this sea-port. It is not unnatural to suppose that this vow had some reference to the recovery of health. Perhaps Phœbe had helped him with her care during a time of sickness. This would have been true deaconess-work. If this conjecture is correct, then there is a gratitude here in St. Paul's language similar to the gratitude which finds expression elsewhere in a reference to "the beloved physician." It was on this same missionary journey, that, as we are reminded by the Revised Version of the New Testament, St. Paul was detained by sickness in Galatia (Gal. iv. 13) ; and it was immediately after this time that he met St. Luke at Troas. Loving and useful service which has been rendered in a time of suffering is rewarded by a permanent blessing, and abounds afterwards by many thanksgivings unto God.

If we thus mark carefully the place from which Phœbe came, we should mark with equal care the place to which she was sent. A voyage from the neighbourhood of Corinth to Rome was at that time attended with far greater difficulty and fatigue than at present. Such difficulty and fatigue give point to one part of the example. This solitary errand, thus bravely undertaken, illustrates the duties which a deaconess in the Church may be called upon to discharge. St. Paul says to the

Roman Christians, concerning Phœbe, that they are to "assist her in whatsoever business she had need of them;" and certainly it is our duty on behalf of all who thus courageously exercise their feminine ministry, that we make their tasks as easy as we can, and that we surround them with respectful sympathy.

(2) That Epistle to the Philippians, to which I referred before, begins in a remarkable manner. In the opening salutation the Apostle, contrary to his usual custom, addresses particularly the "bishops and deacons." Did these "deacons" include women? Were the two co-ordinate sections of the Helping Ministry established at Philippi? I think it probable that the answer to these two questions ought to be affirmative. I will not, however, pursue the inquiry, but will proceed at once to a request which is preferred by St. Paul to two women who are named in the Epistle, and who, most probably, were members of the diaconate.

"I beseech Euodias and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord" (iv. 2). There had been some failure in the maintenance of harmony between these two women; and there is a most striking reiteration and symmetry in the form of the appeal. The word "beseech" is twice repeated. Probably we should not be far wrong if we were to infer from this that there was fault on both sides. This is commonly the case when a serious misunderstanding arises. Certainly, when any such occurrence takes place, self-examination is a duty on each side—for certainly want of harmony sadly hinders the efficiency, and tarnishes the dignity, of Christian work. The rules for conducting such self-examination are very simple. We should do unto others "as we would that they should do unto us," and each should "esteem other better than herself."

And the words which follow (iv. 3) deserve our careful notice. The "true yoke-fellow" may have been Epaphroditus or St. Luke. We need not attempt to settle that question. The appeal to him is this—"help those women, because they laboured with me in the Gospel." So the turn of the sentence is correctly given in the Revised Version. The fact that there was want of harmony was no reason why their good and useful co-operation in the work of the Gospel should not be recognised. On the contrary, it was the strongest reason why all that tended to spoil that work should be removed. We need not, indeed, limit the word "help" here to efforts for reconciliation, though primarily, no doubt, it has that reference. And no efforts are more worthy of being patiently made. "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."

(3) Allusion has been twice made to the Revised Version.

And now, when we come to our last Biblical illustration, we find that this new revision has rescued a very important passage from serious error. I will not argue concerning the meaning of the sentence we must select from the passage in the First Epistle to Timothy (iii. 11), where St. Paul describes the qualifications of those who are worthy to be admitted into the ministries of the Church. Having strong convictions on the subject, after having thought about it for many years, I will merely note three features of character, which are set forth there as recommendations for the female diaconate.

First, there is to be "gravity" of outward demeanour. This does not mean gloom: but it does mean seriousness and simplicity. As to anything like levity, this—with so much sorrow, so much sin all around us—must surely be impossible.

And the next qualification is "sobriety" of mind. Nothing can be more essential in such a calling than the maintaining of a just balance, the possession of "a right judgment in all things," the observing of due proportion, firm resistance to mere impulse, the avoiding of extremes, and, above all, the avoiding of inconsistency.

Finally, "trustworthiness" in all things. So I understand the word "faithful" in this passage. It must be confessed, with much sadness of heart, that lack of strict truthfulness may be combined with most earnest devotion. When we have a point to gain, in a matter of religion, we may sometimes be tempted to be less scrupulous than we ought to be in the manner of obtaining our end. Thus God is dishonoured, our conscience is weakened and lowered, and where the utmost confidence ought to subsist, distrust is created. "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay," says the Great Master.

Thus from various scenes named in Scripture—from Jerusalem, from Bethany, from Galilee, from Joppa—we have gathered instances of the loving, faithful devotion of women to Christ; from various places visited by Christ's Apostle—from Corinth, from Ephesus, from Philippi, from Rome—we have collected instances of the early establishment of a female diaconate in the Church. I venture to add Rome; for I cannot but believe that some of those who are named in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, must have belonged to the diaconate. This thought was in my mind, when, a few years ago, I saw the names "Tryphæna and Tryphosa" on monuments belonging to "Cæsar's household." However this may be, we cannot doubt that we have had before us a great principle of the New Testament, unobtrusive, indeed, but pervading, and therefore demanding the most serious study.

I ventured to say above that I think we are in a crisis of the question. I do not see how anyone who looks carefully

around can fail to see indications of this. Some parts of this great subject may, before long, attract attention in very serious forms. All this ought to make us feel our responsibility, to make us ready to inquire and willing to learn, to dispose us to patience, to quicken our prayers.

And, for one last word, I will say that no woman, however lowly her estimate of herself, ought to doubt that she may do much good at such a time. Great capabilities indeed—such as may have been possessed by Priscilla and Phœbe—are gifts of God. But great opportunities may be granted to such as Anna and Lydia. His Providence must guide us. His Holy Spirit must teach us. “In quietness and in confidence must be our strength.” May He give to us, in this troubled time, the blessing of a “quiet mind”! May His strength “be made perfect in our weakness”!

J. S. HOWSON.



ART. III.—PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF CALIFORNIA.

THERE is a shallow notion, and it is to be feared somewhat popular in this country, that California is a land of rowdiness and gold-digging, where a man has to be ever on the watch to guard against assaults on his life and property; and to do so with anything like success he must always carry about with him a bowie-knife and a six-shooter. There can be no doubt that at the outset the unexpected influx of a great multitude of heterogeneous characters from all parts of the world, instigated mainly, if not exclusively, by the “cursed thirst of gold,” led to a good deal of lawlessness and social disorder. The immigration of gold-diggers was out of all proportion to the ordinary civil jurisdiction. The scum of the earth was suddenly brought to the surface, and as the social fermentation went on the refuse kept boiling over, and settling wherever new gold-fields were discovered. At that date unquestionably “the rough” had the upper hand. Law and order were little heeded by the masses who congregated at the gold-fields, who rushed with eagerness from every city in the New and Old World, with no other motive than to get rich, honestly if they could, but if not, by any means, fair or foul. Scenes of anarchy and bloodshed desecrated every mining district wherever the “rowdies” established a temporary settlement. A man was shot or stabbed for the veriest trifles. Free fights were events