Women and Belief, 1852–1928

Edited and with a new introduction by Jessica Cox, Mark Llewellyn, Nadine Muller

Series: History of Feminism

Co-published by Routledge and Edition Synapse

Over recent years, research into religious belief during the Victorian period and the early twentieth century has grown in diversity and importance. The centrality of faith-based discourses to women of the period has long been recognized by scholars in the field. But until now relatively little significance has been attached to the fundamental relationship between women’s faith and women’s rights. This new title in the History of Feminism series remedies that omission. Women and Belief, 1852–1928 is a six-volume collection of primary materials covering a wide range of opinions about women, their self-identity, and the combination of their spiritual and political beliefs.

Addressing the most debated aspects of women’s religious, social, cultural, and political rights, the collection adopts an historical overview of the period and provides an authoritative representation of the wide body of literature written by and about women’s faith. Beginning with an example of how religious discourse provided a model for acceptable female behaviour and a satirical take on women’s rights and spiritualism, and ending with an economist’s psychoanalytic study of female belief from 1928, Women and Belief, 1852–1928 provides a unique collection of different viewpoints. It brings together the work of women writers, theologians, philosophers, and economic and cultural historians to illustrate the multiplicity of voices and opinions on the issues of suffrage and religious faith. This diversity is equally reflected in the broad geographical coverage of the collection which draws on works not only from the United Kingdom and United States but also includes materials from Canada and India, and moves beyond the Christian into the spheres of theosophy, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism. The gathered materials include works of non-fiction, poetry, analytical works, satires, pamphlets, sermons, spiritual (auto)biography, and periodical articles.

Selected Table of Contents:


Volume II: 2. Luther Lee, Woman’s Right to Preach the Gospel (1853) (22pp.)


Volume V: 17. B. H. Kare, How is Woman Treated by Man and Religion? (Bombay, 1896) (12pp.)


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Especially in recent years, late nineteenth-century novels, short stories, and essays have attracted considerable scholarly interest. Research into texts by and about the New Woman has played a major role in shaping a critical understanding of fin-de-siècle literature, New Journalism, gender politics, activism, work, and education. Serious academic work has, in particular, focused on changing gender roles and women’s participation in the public sphere and urban spaces. This new title in the History of Feminism series, co-published by Routledge and Edition Synapese, is a four-volume collection of primary materials which builds on this existing scholarship. It brings together a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts first published between the 1800s and the early twentieth century to present different aspects of what it meant to be a female journalist at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The gathered works are reproduced in facsimile, giving users a strong sense of immediacy to the texts and permitting citation to the original pagination. The collection is also supplemented by a detailed and comprehensive introduction, newly written by the editor, which contextualizes the material in terms of fin-de-siècle publishing, journalism, and authorship. And with a detailed appendix providing data on the magazines, newspapers, and periodicals in which the articles and stories of the period were originally published, the collection is destined to be welcomed as a vital reference and research resource.

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