

WOMEN OF FAITH IN VICTORIAN CULTURE

Also by Anne Hogan

RESEARCHING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: A Coming of Age?
(co-editor with N. Broadbent, J. Inkson and M. Miller)

Also by Andrew Bradstock

SAINTS AND SANDINISTAS

RADICAL RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE ENGLISH
REVOLUTION

FAITH IN THE REVOLUTION

Women of Faith in Victorian Culture

Reassessing the Angel in the House

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For
Caitlin

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in S.G. Riley (ed.), *Consumer Magazines of the British Isles* (1993); and short works on George Eliot, Adrienne Rich and other women writers. Her research interests include the relationship between religion, gender and issues of selfhood in the work of nineteenth-century women writers.

Preface

Mary Grey

The Angel in the House as literary motif has exercised its fascination ever since Virginia Woolf singled it out as the reason why women found it impossible to succeed with serious writing: 'It was she who used to come between me and my paper when I was writing reviews. It was she who bothered me and wasted my time and so tormented me that at last I killed her ... She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish ... She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught, she sat in it ... above all – I need not say it – *she was pure* ... In those days – the last of Queen Victoria – every house had its angel.'¹

The uniqueness of this book is that the writers have taken this *leit-motiv* as a challenge to understand the lives of women of faith in Victorian times across a variety of approaches: they explore the Angel in the House across the disciplines of history, literature, religion and cultural studies and show just how difficult it was for women to write against the grain of the cultural stereotypes of purity and obedience. The book originated as a day conference at La Sainte Union College when the excitement of this cross-disciplinary approach was very tangible: the book certainly keeps this energy alive and I believe it makes an important contribution to the understanding of the struggles of Victorian women in the spheres of both religion and literary achievement.

NOTE

1. Virginia Woolf, 'Professions for Women', a Paper read to The Women's Service League, in Harriet Scott Cheesman (ed.), *Literary Angels* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994), pp. 136–7.