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AL/1940

ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE,
ENGLEFIELD GREEN,
SURREY.

March 9th 1914

Dear Madam,

I am much interested by your summary of the answers received to your circular letter. As to the questions to which you now invite an answer, I have no very strong opinion as to the advisability of confining the Conference to women, or to Church people. I think that the presence of men who were heartily sympathetic would be a great help; but the presence of men who were adverse might make discussion difficult; yet it

would seem impossible not to admit the
one class if the other is admitted. On the
whole I am inclined to agree with you
that at this stage a conference of Church
people might get further than one more
mixed. Even among Church people there are
such different conceptions as to what priest-
hood does a word mean that it might
be very difficult to find a basis for common
understanding in a wider body.

It is very difficult to speak with
any certainty as to a possible date.
It is not yet settled what is to be the

first day of our autumn term. The week you
mention would certainly fall within the
term, and any date chosen in term time
might become impossible for me by the
fixing of a College or University meeting
which I might be bound to attend.
Also, if it is a whole day conference, I
should probably in any case ^{not} be able to
attend during the whole time. So I think

I had better not be considered in the
fixing of the date. The latter part of
September is likely to suit me; but

if the convenient date is later, & falls within
the term, I can only say that Thursday is
often a bad day, as liable to be chosen for
various important meetings.

As to a paper, I think the "Ideal Priesthood
or "Priesthood and Vocation" would cover the
kind of thing I should be inclined to say.

But please do not scruple to cut me out
if you have too many offers for the
time. I am sure there are many who
would be more interesting or important than
I could be. What sort of length of
paper do you contemplate?

I am wondering whether you received

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any answer from my sister Mrs. Allworthy?

I know she did not answer at once,
owing to the arrival of a first-baby,
and for various other reasons that
made outside interests take a secondary
place. But I know she is much
interested. Her husband, the Rev.

J. B. Allworthy ^{B.D.} is I think quite
inclined to give his support. If you
want the names of clergy who are
favourable I am sure his might be
added to the list. He has been engaged

on some research on the question of orders in the early Church, and has taken a special interest in all that bears on the position of women. In fact, his views are helpfully revolutionary. The present address, in case you think it worth while to communicate with him, is St. Anselm's Hostel, Dickenson Rd., Rusholme, Manchester; but he is going away after Easter to the parish of Martin-cum-Timberland, Lincolnshire.

The following facts seem to me to be

brought out prominently by the replies -

1. The intimate connection between the question and the political one.
 2. The great weight of prejudice to be overcome.
 3. ~~Two~~ widely different ideas of what the priesthood is or involves.
 4. A strong desire for a more effective ministry of women.
 5. A widely prevalent doubt, even among sympathisers, of the present advisability or practicability of any forward movement.
- Some of the answers raise interesting questions on points of dogma - (by the way, in some matters 'dogma' & 'prejudice' are hard to disentangle) - e.g.
- "the doctrine of the Apostolic succession"

having traced a male priesthood." Is not sex
just an accident here? an accident to
which usage has given the weight of
an essential?

"Our Lord never contemplated so" - and
"The Priesthood was intended by our
Lord for men alone." How do we
know? Can we certainly say that
He intended a priesthood at all, in
the sense in which we now under-
stand it?

"an essential part of the Christian
faith". !!! Why then has it not a place in
the creeds?

"merely a doctrine of Faith" and anathema?
Does this writer think all "faith" is of

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a canonical order, or only the fault of women? And does she mean that "common sense" must be antagonistic to the doctrines of the Church, thoroughly studied?

If so this answer is really against the need of any organized religion, and any priesthood, male or female.

Some of the answers referring to deaconesses seem actually to overlook the low status and (generally speaking) low educational and intellectual standing of the order of deaconesses as it presently existing. If this order furnished ample

scope etc., surely we should find more women of outstanding ability & character flinging themselves into it. Women are not backward in these days in devotion to causes and services that demand their best. It is because the order of deaconesses (like other clerical work offered to women) makes such a poor demand in comparison with other forms of service that the educated woman's response is so small.

"Our Lord was not a woman...."

"His mother was a woman" - Is not this separation of the masculine & feminine ideals - one hard for men, many for women - unchristian, unscriptural, and grossly material?

"No woman apostle" - Is not the condition of society at the time enough to account for this? Could a woman with \rightarrow safety have gone about as an active evangelist?

"The first woman bishop would be a marked heck in the continuity." Why so, any more than (say) the first black bishop? The apostles were

all of the white race.

Is the cooperation of deaconesses, as deaconesses are at present, in the least to be expected? Do they not mostly belong to the less educated (in the widest sense) class of women? Are there many among them capable of standing out as leaders of thought & action in a great movement?

This is rather long; but you asked for comments on the answers.

Yours very truly

M. L. J. Taylor