

AL/2019

BISHOPSHOLME,  
SHEFFIELD.

Private & Confidential.

1st. May 1917.

Dear Miss Picton-Turbevill,

I have already written to Canon Streeter, thanking him for the book he sent me. I told him I should read it carefully, as it is a subject of great importance, and I have already read the book through once. I imagine that the Bishops will consider the question shortly, and it is exactly one of those subjects on which it is most important that the whole Episcopate should act together. One of the causes of our troubles in the past has been the lack of unity amongst the Bishops, and it has produced a very considerable crop of difficulties. I have a good many criticisms to make personally on your book.

- (1) You do not, I think, take sufficiently into account that the employment of the services of Laymen in consecrated buildings is an extremely novel, and most people think, illegal proceeding.
- (2) You tend to minimise the very rapid advance the Church has recently made in the employment of the services of women as speakers on very varied occasions.
- (3) Under the head of pastoral work, women have always played a great part in parochial life.
- (4) When you narrow the question down to Laywomen having a similar license to that granted to Laymen, you will have to reckon

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AL/2019  
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on the very great prejudice that exists, even now. with regard to Laymen preaching in consecrated buildings, which is certain to be far greater if it is extended to Laywomen, and which will meet with the opposition of a very large number of the most earnest of ~~women~~ Church workers.

I only mention these points because I do not think that their importance is sufficiently recognised in your book. On the great fundamental principles which are at stake, I am now engaged in investigating more closely the historical question, and I do not feel yet in a position to give a decided opinion upon so important a subject, except to emphasise the principle that so fundamental a change in the custom of the Church cannot be decided by individual Bishops, but must wait the considered verdict of the whole Church. I am strongly in favour of women being on equal terms with men on all parochial, Ruri-decahal, and Diocesan Conferences, and have always voted for it. I am also strongly in favour, and always have been, of Female Suffrage, though I think it is more likely to be successful if it proceeds by stages, than at one fell swoop. I only mention these personal opinions of my own to show that my mind is not closed by any means on the subjects, about which you and Canon Streeter have written.

Yours very truly,

Leonard W. Sheffield