

OUR BANNER.

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WOMEN AND THE DEACON'S OFFICE.

It is generally known that one of our congregations having recently elected a female member to the office of deacon, "the question of the right of women to ordination to the office of deacon" came up before Presbytery, and was by Presbytery referred to Synod. The Synod answered the question by adopting the following item in the report of the Committee on Discipline: "That such ordination is, in our judgment, in harmony with the New Testament, and with the Constitution of the Apostolic Church." As some of the brethren, however, dissented from this decision, it was referred to a small committee to draw up a statement of the grounds on which Synod arrived at the conclusion indicated above.

And here we regard it of special importance, to keep steadily in view what the question really is, so as to allow no extraneous matter to be imported into its consideration. The question is not, May a woman preach and otherwise undertake the work of the Gospel Ministry? Or, may she be invested with the office of Ruling Elder, and sit in church courts? These are questions which we are persuaded our Synod would have answered in the negative, even more harmoniously than it answered the other in the affirmative. One point only, however, is now before us—the right of women, duly elected and qualified, to ordination to the office of deacon—and we object to burden the argument with any more general issues. The other questions referred to are never likely to come up for consideration in our church, and if they should, it will be time enough to consider them when they do actually arise.

Now there are two lines of argument on which we may proceed in considering this question, namely, the scriptural and the historical.

of Edinburgh, (in substance in the *Presbyterian Review* of last April), and the discussion that followed, shewed what an interest it has excited throughout the churches. And it is but meet that our church should lead the way in this matter. We accord to our female members their corporate right more fully than any church of the Reformation, and by following up what has, at our late meeting of Synod, been so auspiciously begun, we may still farther draw out into active operation the mighty moral force, lodged in our devoted, Christian women, and thus accomplish a work for which posterity will bless us.

Committee of Synod.

HOW TO GAIN HONOR.

BY THE REV. J. C. M FEETERS, PARNASSUS, PA.

“For them that honor me I will honor.” 1 Samuel 2: 30.

How positive these words ! There is no doubt here ; nor the shadow of doubt ; nor an uncertain syllable out of which to form a shadow. The clear truth shines out like the sun on a June morning. Give God honor, and he will give you honor.

The human heart craves honor. Human nature shuns abasement ; longs for promotion ; is not satisfied with a low position ; looks with longing eyes out among the stars, and wishes to be as bright as they, and as high, and as glorious. A state of humility is not man’s natural condition. He was created upright, with his face to radiate the light of the sky, and his thoughts to reach around the great creation, and his ambition to make way for him into the fuller glories of God.

But man fell by sinning against God ; he lost his honorable position by disobeying God ; and now humility is a necessity ; it is the first part of the journey up the hill from which he has descended. This humility consists in confessing sin, submitting to God’s will, cheerfully taking the lowliest position God assigns, and there rendering all the service possible, and with a glad heart. This humility is on the road to honor. Sinful man is low down at the beginning ; he does not know it ; yet he is there all the same. He is down low enough to be loathed by holiness ; to be condemned by justice ; to be wept over by mercy ; to be pitied by infinite love ; down low enough to find delight in disgrace, to drink in sin with greediness, to despise the law of God, to attempt to live without God and against him. That is almost as low as the devil. And it is just there the sinful man finds himself when he comes to his right mind. There is a peculiar frenzy, a sort of hallucination which seizes the human mind, and breeds proud thoughts, and gives birth to the opinion that we are high up at the start ; and vain man imagines that he is walking among the clouds of honor, when he is among the clouds of the smoky pit. He disdains to start in the low steps of humility ; that seems like going backward. He cannot

confess sin, nor confess God; he is above all that such consider that they are beyond this point, and must keep moving onward. The mistake they make is this,—they think they are moving forward when they are going backward; they think they are climbing when they are falling. They are making progress like Lucifer, when hurled from heaven, head first from the heights to the depths: and possibly they may not realize their mistake till they strike the fiery lake in their terrible plunge. May they be awakened in time to return. To all such, the station of humility is back on the road to honor, and high up on that road, about half way up to heaven.

But this royal road cannot be traveled without the help of the Lord. You cannot arise into honor independent of God. If you live independent of God, your honor, whatever kind you have, will wither; your very face will wither and never be reflushed with youthfulness; your strength will wither, and never be recovered; your hopes will wither, and never be reanimated; your ambition will wither, and never be revived; your reputation will wither, and never regain its charms; your beauty will be consumed in the grave; your desires will vanish into despair; your name will perish in darkness; and your soul will sink in the miseries of the second death. You can arise into honor only by the help of the Lord. You have not cash enough, nor talent enough, nor culture enough, nor enough of anything to bring you to honor, except you have the grace of God. That is the essential thing for honor. You may climb into a degree of credit, and into a kind of fame, where the world will fling its flummery of praises around you; but that will be short lived, unless you climb the road of Christian fidelity. You must ascend in the favor of God, or each step upward will make the fall greater in the end.

What is honor? the favor of the people? the possession of wealth? the wearing of first-class suits? the glitter of ornaments? the praises of multitudes? Nay, this is not honor; at best it is only the chromo of honor. Absalom had favor among the people, and he descended into infamy. Achan could don a splendid suit, but went down in disgrace. Jezebel could flash queenly ornaments, yet she became food for dogs. Herod sat engrossed in the ecstasies of popular praise, yet sank forthwith into a most vile and terrible faté. There is no honor in these outward marks that distinguish the people one from another. Honor lies deeper; honor rises higher; honor comes from another source; honor rests upon other foundations; honor is but the growth and bloom and fruit of moral excellence, and faithfulness to God. Go where you may for honor, you will not find it, unless you go to God for it.

What is honor? elevation to places of trust? election to offices of authority? advancement to the presidency, or governorship, or mayoralty, or some other position over the people? Is this honor? Not in itself; not by any means. This can be enjoyed only by the few

The many are excluded by the very nature of things. And as God gives his gifts freely, and upbraids none who ask, and has honors in abundance to give, surely he would not exclude the multitudes and favor the few. God is not a Chief of autocrats; he is not one of a few. The offices of the nation are places of trust and toil and dread responsibility; but the human idea of honor attached to them by man, passes away in the sight of God; it is only incidental, artificial, temporary, like the colors of the rainbow, without substance and soon to fade away. Men can be noble as any king on earth, and yet never be promoted above the ordinary levels of life. There are women who live in quiet glory, with God shining in their heart, and virtue shining in their works, whose names are never shouted by the public, whose brows never wear a garland. Go in search of honor among the high places of the land; but you will not find it, unless you go to God for it.

Honor consists in that worth of soul, which makes the angels shout; in that excellency of conduct which brings the plaudit from the Lord; in the grandeur of a pure and holy life which makes the lowliest resemble God. And this honor you can get, without the torture and humiliation and fearful sacrifices, endured by the Presidential candidates; and it will lift you far above the sentimental honors of the Presidential chair,—the highest official seat among the nations.

You will increase in honor, just in proportion as you are zealous for the Lord. We get this out of the text; not out of the daily newspapers. This is what God thinks about the matter; not what politicians think. We have read the eloquent tributes paid to the great aspirants after the supreme seat of trust in this nation; but we have not heard anything concerning their relation to God, nor of the redeeming power of grace over their lives. None of them has been wreathed, in that hour when rockets of oratory bespangled their zenith, with the immortal honors of godliness. The speakers came with their profusion of flowers and leaves, and placed the chaplet on the head, each of his friend and hero. But the chaplet must wither as surely as the branches cut from the myrtle, or the flowers of the orange. The air was hot with the steady rays of a June sun pouring down upon Chicago, without a bracing breeze from the lake; and it was hot with the bombastic eulogies of human greatness, unto moral suffocation, without one refreshing breeze of religious commendation. The vast convention hall became a magnificent censer, from which clouds of incense ascended to mortal heroes; without one sweet waft to God, except the opening prayers. They who caught the inspiration of that convention must have felt that the highest honors were attainable, and God entirely left out of view.

Such is the common political opinion. You can climb into worldly honors by staying out of the Church, just as successfully as by entering into her communion, and perhaps better; the world furnishes ladders for climbing which the church cannot afford. You need not

lean on the arm of God to command the applause of men. The people applauded the speakers; applauded every pointed allusion to man's achievements. They made the great auditorium ring with their shouts in praise of human attainments; and they grew wild in their demonstrations; and they cheered for the dead; and they cheered the living; and they cheered the party; and they cheered the platform; and they cheered even the eloquence of the minister's prayers. But no speaker ventured one allusion to moral greatness; nor was there one cheer for the religious qualifications of any candidate. Only one utterance was made which indirectly pointed out the nobler qualities which make men great; and it was so indirect that elsewhere it would have failed of notice; but coming in the tumultuous excitement, and in the profuse tributes of worldly praise, it was like the majesty of thunder upon the waters; and it came from the lips of Hon. Chauncey M. Depew. In the presence of that vast assembly that champion railroad confessed that he had prayed over his candidacy. But he blotted the noble record before the sun set twice, by his wine and Sabbath desecration.

You may increase in worldly honor without one spark of zeal for the Lord. But that honor will dry up like the leaves of a tree in autumn, and only make the last flames burn with greater vehemence about your naked soul. But the honor that comes from God endures; the honor that springs from loyalty to God will never wither. The honest effort to glorify the Lord will be followed by the unfolding of his glory before the eyes of that soul. The sacrifice made for the honor of God will be rewarded with a benediction from the lips of God. They who work and watch for King Jesus arising in his power shall see magnificent sights. The heart that throbs with the great interests of the kingdom of Christ will feel sweetest raptures. The hands employed for the progress of the church with devoted skill shall do wonderful works. The soul that is girded with the truth to run ahead of the chariot of the mighty Prince, shall be made strong to enter in at the heavenly gate in the presence of his Lord. And is this not honor enough.

Then arise and enter into the honors God is offering. The way to honor is clear to any who shall walk therein. By close alliance with God; by a growing confidence in him; by a deepening love for him; by a vigorous purpose to exalt his name, and herald his truth, and advance his cause on earth, you can arise into heights of honor of which you have never yet dreamed. Every noble thought for Christ brings you more under the influence of Christ. Every sacrifice for the redeemer brings you more consciously under the power of the world above. Every service rendered unto God lifts you higher into the glory of God. Every exercise of your soul in the gospel bring into your nature more godliness, more Christlines, and more of the Holy Spirit, adds to your dignity as an heir of glory.

And how can you best honor God? By honoring his son Jesus Christ. He says so himself. "He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father." And as Christ is disowned in politics to this day, so the Father is dishonored. That name, so prominent in the world, so exalted by the Father, so invested with royal glory, is excluded from the platforms of the great political parties; and every vestige of Christian morality is excluded. And even the Prohibition Convention deliberately, and in the face of a powerful appeal, thrust the Saviour King with the same sharp rapier. They thought their platform better without any reference to him, whom God hath empowered to rule the nations. Honor God then by crying out against the grievous wrong protracted against his son. Keep out of politics, while politics is such an infamous system of divine robbery. Who can occupy such platforms, and not be guilty of resisting the will of God, and obscuring the glory of Jesus? You cannot go to the polls yet in the name of Christ, you cannot vote in the name of Christ yet, even in the third party. Let us be zealous for that NAME which is above every name; and which our Government an hundred years old, has not even learned to lisp. Col. A. C. Babcock resented an attempt to suppress the name of Blaine in the G and Pacific Hotel. He said he would exhibit the portrait of his candidate however resisted; and exhibit too in the hotel where he was forbidden; and would cover the city with the portrait of the man of his choice. So let there be zeal and courage among those who have accepted Christ as King; let his name be heard; let his rights be known; let his claims be advanced. And though opposition may be encountered, let his friends stand the more firmly; let their love flame into heroic action; let them determine that he shall be heralded, and his crown proclaimed in every city, and to all borders of the nation.

*MAINTAINING MARTYRS' TESTIMONY.**

BY THE REV. W. B. LAIRD, NEW CASTLE, PA.

This is our memorial day. We have assembled to talk of our martyred dead; to consider their character and work; and to honor their memory. It is our privilege to meet not merely as their associates or their successors in the Lord's work, but as their children. We claim a near relationship to them. Our relationship may be in some instances one of kindred; but that which we more rejoice in is the fact that we are related to them as believers are to their father Abraham. We profess to hold the truth for which they died; to hold it as they held it; to give their interpretation to it; and to be as consistent in our profession as were they.

*An Address delivered at Synod's Bi-Centenary Celebration.