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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 by Presbytery was referred to Synod: 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 or 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, to which we have referred, 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. Confining ourselves, for the present, to the former, let us inquire, does the New Testament sanction the practice of women holding the office of deacon, and is it, as far as we know, consistent with the constitution and practice of the apostolic church? We

of Scotland, in May last, a resolution was passed that deaconesses henceforth be ordained not by Presbyteries, but by kirk sessions. The great Presbyterian Council that lately met in London also grappled with this question, and the paper on the subject by Professor Charteris, of Edinburgh, (in substance in the *Presbyterian Review* of last April,) and the discussion that followed showed what an interest it has excited throughout the churches. And it is but meet that our church should lead in this matter. We accord to our female members their corporate rights more fully than any church of the Reformation, and in following up what has at our late meeting of Synod been so auspiciously begun, we may still further 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.

SHOULD A WOMAN BE ORDAINED A DEACON?*

GENTLEMEN OF THE THEOLOGICAL CLASS:—It devolves upon me this evening to welcome you to your studies, as I do now for myself and my associates. In this connection, it is usual to consider some subject related to your calling. There is a topic which seems to have a claim at this time, on account of the action of last Synod, and the little discussion previously given to it in our church, that is, Should a Woman be ordained a Deacon? Ordination is the formal act of the church investing one with office. For this there must be, in this case, the warrant of Christ, and the voice of the people. You all know the history of this question as now brought before us. It was not taken up as a theoretical question, though it has been much discussed by church historians and other writers. One of our smaller congregations, feebly equipped with male members, chose to the office of deacon one of the female members, one that had shown efficiency in temperance and evangelistic work. There is here the choice of the people. Is there the warrant of Christ? No question is raised, of personal fitness. The whole matter is a question relating to sex. All acknowledge this; the disability, if it exists, is a disability of sex.

This brings before us the wonderful advance of late years in removing the disabilities of women. The whole subject of the advance of women opens up an interesting field of study. I shall not refer to woman's condition in the barbarous nations, where, though burdened, she was not treated with the indignity which more advanced nations visited upon her. I shall refer only to classic lands, and then to the great Indian Peninsula, where a sad condition of affairs exists even to this day, yet with efforts to remove it.

As to Greece, whose language flourished when the New Testament was written, in the heroic ages women seem to have been held in higher esteem than in historic times. Penelope and Antigone were respected and admired. They were neither toys nor slaves. Grecian women

*Lecture by Prof. D. B. Willson at opening of session, 1888-9, of the Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Pa., September 18, 1888.

directed the household. Xenophon represents Ischomachus as saying to his young wife, "You must consider yourself the guardian of our domestic commonwealth, and dispose of all its resources as the commander of a garrison disposes of the soldiers under his command." They taught their children and were beloved by them. Themistocles, it is reported, said of his infant son, "This little fellow is the most influential person I know. Why? He completely governs his mother, while she governs me, and I the whole of Greece." As to customs, to cut the hair was always a sign of grief, and when a Grecian woman placed her tresses on her husband's tomb, it was a precious memorial of her affectionate grief. Yet the rule was that a woman's face should be veiled with a long veil, similar to those worn by slaves. In general, woman among the Greeks was in a state of great, although not slavish subjection to man. There was little intercourse between the sexes. Women were seldom allowed to go abroad, and in later times this seclusion continued, and they had less to do than before with the business and pleasures of men. This state of subjection and degradation remained even in the best period of Greece. Unmarried women were closely watched. Their apartment in the house was commonly kept closed. Married women were allowed only liberty as far as the door or yard. Mothers had a little more freedom. Women had more liberty at Sparta than at Athens. There married women only were required to wear veils abroad; the unmarried might appear without them. Marriage was promoted and controlled by the laws. In Sparta, penalties were inflicted upon men passing a certain age, unmarried. At Athens, all who wished to be commanders or orators, or to hold any public office, must be married. There was then no public life for respectable women. The other class were abroad, for licentiousness was exceedingly common, and was favored even by the system of worship. In Athens distinguished men openly associated with dissolute women. Corinth was more badly corrupted.

As to Rome, in the early days, marriage gave the wife privileges which were considerable and honorable. When married in strict form, the two eating the sacred salted cake together, the wife was set in a place of dignity and power. The State looked to her interests and welfare, though she belonged more to the family than to the community. Her legal personality was merged in that of her husband. He was the master of the household, but she was as much the mistress, as he was the master. Her legal position was that of her husband's child. But he had not the power over her that he had over his children—to sell them into slavery or to put them to death in certain cases, or in infancy to allow them to die. As to customs, women seldom went abroad, and when they did, they usually had their faces veiled. When luxury and wealth increased, dress became with many the chief matter, and women of fashion were then, as now, devoted to it. The hair was bound with fillets or ribbons. Ribbons seem to have been peculiar to modest women. Marriage was held to be the duty of every Roman, and those who neglected it were taxed—that is, fined. There was little public life for respectable women.

As to India, not only as a matter of the past but of the present time. The attention of the world has been fixed particularly of late on the women of India by the work of Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati. The Introduction by the late Rachel L. Bodley, M. D., dean of the Woman's

Medical College of Pennsylvania, tells of Anandibai Joshee, a Hindu woman, educated in Philadelphia, who declared in starting out: "I will go (to America) as a Hindu, and come back and live among my people as a Hindu." She did so. What a strain it was, will appear. The population of Hindustan numbers two hundred and fifty millions; more than three-fifths of them are professors of the Hindu religion in one form or other. Their religious customs are essentially the same; the social customs differ slightly in different parts of the country. Ramabai came to America to Mrs. Joshee's graduation in medicine in Philadelphia, March 11, 1886, and has written a book as to Hindu women. The whole story is taken up under three heads: childhood, youth or married life; widowhood or old age. As to childhood, she tells us that a girl is ever made to feel that she is an unwelcome, unbidden guest in the family. Religion enjoins that every girl must be given in marriage; the neglect of this duty means for the father unpardonable sin, public ridicule, and caste excommunication. Hence a high class Brahman may take advantage of this provision, and may marry ten, twenty, or even a hundred and fifty girls, receiving presents from their parents, and go away, leaving them, not to return. This mock marriage, as we would call it, does not exist among the non-Brahman caste, but to offset it, the Rajputs, who belong to the warrior caste, practise infanticide, in the case of the girls,—yet not as sanctioned by their religion. It has been forbidden by the Hindu princes of the semi-independent States, yet "a belief, deeply-rooted in the hearts and religiously observed by the people for centuries, could not be removed by external rules" (*Ramabai*). The census of 1870 shows that three hundred children were stolen in one year by wolves in the city of Umrizar, *all being girls*, and this is where the British Government has sway. The census of 1880-1 shows over 5,000,000 more men than women in India. The system of early marriage, child marriage, goes back at least as far as 500 B. C. Marriage is the only 'Sacrament' administered to a woman of high caste, Vedic texts being pronounced at the time. The girl then is the man's property, and that of his near relations. In northern and southern India, this ceremony is a betrothal, irrevocable however. Marriage as a social ceremony, takes place some years later. The family system is a joint system; four generations may be under one roof. Men and women have but little in common. The young bride must never talk or laugh loudly, must not speak before or to the father or elder brother-in-law, or any other distant male relatives of her husband, unless commanded to do so. In Northern India where all women wear veils, she veils her face before them. In Southern India, where women do not, as a rule, wear veils, they show respect by rising and remaining standing while their elders or their husbands are present. The Hindu religion does command honor for women to a certain extent and so it is among Aryan Hindus, but the honor centres in regard paid to the mother, as in China, the mother occupies the place of honor. "Let thy mother be to thee like unto a god," is one of the commandments of the Hindus, yet women as a class are set low in their sacred books, and with sad results. It is not necessary to quote the low opinion expressed in these books. It is one of distrust as bad and false. Hence the custom of seclusion for women, which existed as far back as 600 B. C. Religion for a woman consists

in submission to all this, and never to do anything but that which is approved by law and custom. The law has a firm grasp. An instance is given by Ramabai. A child marriage was performed in her family connection; thirteen years after the young man came for his wife. The parents were now unwilling to let her go; they shared the "advanced" views that are making headway in India, and judged him an unfit companion for their daughter. The young wife, of course, was a stranger to him. But the stricter class raised money to sue her and her parents in the British Court of Justice. The ground was treaties, by which except in cases of life and death, the Government is not to interfere with the social and religious customs and laws of the people. The verdict was for the husband, according to Hindu law. A more recent case has been tried at Bombay. The woman pleaded that the marriage was concluded without her consent, that is a British plea for a decree of invalidity. The Justice sustained it. Money was raised by the stricter party and the case was appealed, and the Chief Justice remanded it for trial on its merits according to Hindu law, and the woman was mulcted in the costs last year. This is the old line of slavery decisions as all see, so common in the United States Courts thirty years ago, and we must not exclaim too loudly. These women are beating madly against the bars. Widowhood has a sorrowful end in India. The code of Manu does not involve self-immolation, but this came in later from the priesthood. The Suttee came to be a meritorious act, but on what authority? The priests produced a text from the Rig-Veda, and so the Hindu widow committed herself to the flames on the funeral pile of her deceased husband. Max Muller shows that the Rig-Veda does not assume the death of the wife at the funeral pile, with her husband's body and Ramabai breaks forth against the priests of her former faith; "It was by falsifying a single syllable that the unscrupulous priests managed to change entirely the meaning of the whole verse, Those who know the Sanskrit characters can easily understand that the falsification very likely originated in the carelessness of the transcriber or copyist, but for all that the priests who permitted the error are not excusable in the least." Max Muller says of the verse that "the later Brahmans have falsified and quoted it in support of their cruel tenet." Saved now by the law from the Suttee rite, what is the condition of the widows? Except in the Northwest, they are put to very great trial. They are robbed of all ornaments, and in many parts must yield their tresses, their heads being even shaved. The widow must eat only one meal a day, and the sight of her is regarded as unauspicious; no man but her father, brothers, uncles and her aunt-cousins (who are regarded as brothers,) may see her or speak to her. A Hindu man in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* for September, 1886, says: "To a Hindu widow death is a thousand times more welcome than her miserable existence." This is a sad enough picture of the life of women in India, and any disability woman has endured in classic lands is as naught compared with this. As to Christian lands, the Roman civil law has had long life with many of its maxims. The Canon law has been side by side with it, mitigating, modifying it. Is it unfair to say that many of our ideas and customs are traceable to a heathen origin, and to a heathen condition of society, when traced to the furthest limit? We know this to be the fact as to many matters. Christianity, as brought into the nations, did not at once abolish their customs. Many lived, some were

diverted. Look at the origin of the Christmas festival, and of the May day revel. Customs hold their own against power, and are removed by light, accompanying force. There is an adage, "Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar." One of our missionaries said to me that no American woman should marry an Eastern convert, that it would take several generations for that people to learn to treat a woman as an American wife would expect to be treated. Take the Word of God and urge it upon the life of the Hindu families, and how many conditions are met with in them and in Hindu social life, that cannot be altered at once, and must needs be taken into account while in no wise approved. This is known in dealing with converts. They are not as Abraham, called out of their country and their kindred.

Education is leading the women of India out into liberty. They are learning Sanskrit. Their sisters were kept in ignorance of it. Education is everywhere doing the work of fitting women for diversified employments. They are coming forward. There have been every now and then extraordinary cases. Mary Sommerville in England, followed by Maria Mitchell in our own country, gained a place in the list of those distinguished in science. Women have won a place in the ranks of the medical profession, and have even secured admission to the bar. In 1880, the late Professor Samuel D. Gross became President of the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery. At the 24th commencement that same year, fifty-seven persons graduated, including two women. He writes in his Autobiography. "In congratulating the graduates upon the completion of their studies and upon their entrance into professional life, I extended my special sympathies to the young women. I spoke to them words of encouragement, telling them that they could not fail to do well, if they were true to themselves and to their profession, and that the dentist of the Empress of Germany was a woman, a graduate of the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery. One of them, a native of Germany, took a prize for proficiency in her dental studies, and she is said to possess marked ability, having made herself fairly acquainted with the English language, of which she hardly knew anything on her arrival in this country, two years ago." Women are now fairly equipped for nearly all service. They are not only in stores, but in counting rooms of all kinds of business, in railroad offices, in Government employ, they are on Boards managing Homes, Hospitals, and Schools, and in Canada a lady is on the Board of Church Trustees, they appear on the platform in advocacy of Reforms, with the same freedom that they have long enjoyed on the stage for the amusement of the public. We all know that this advance has been made in the face of opposition. What it cost to move on, women can tell us, better than men. There was long a discrimination in the matter of higher education, necessary to fit women for advance. This is all changing, we may use the past tense speaking of the North, in our land, this is *changed*. The spirit of the age, as we know it, is on their side.

Was our Synod carried on by the tide in its action? The congregation made the choice, they left it to the Courts over them in the Lord under our Presbyterian order, to decide on the propriety of conferring office on a woman. The decision of Synod was in favor, by a vote of 93 to 24, the nays not being ready to approve, but not set in opposition. Does the Word of God countenance such a step? This is the

ultimate question. The movement is in the line of enlarging the field of woman's work in the church of Christ, in duties to God as rendered to his people. It does not seem that a right interpretation of the Word of God can be against this; but as the view is challenged, we must make it clear that his Word approves this. Many of the advocates of Women's Privileges have cast off this standard and care not what it says, as witness Mrs. Caird's article in the last *Westminster Review*. Avoiding the Scylla of subjection, as they regard it, they fall into the Charybdis of license. Even such a woman as Miss Willard, the leader of a large organization, and a Methodist by religious profession, raises a question between Paul and Christ, as to the place of women as if there is a necessity to decide between Jesus and one of his apostles in the inspired record, and not a way in which they may be shown to accord. Is it then necessary to set the Word of God, any part of it, against this church service of women? It is not unfair here to show the need of caution in handling it. It has been set in the course of the Christian centuries against progress in the State and in the Church, and has been thus abused all along the line of history since Christ. See how it is used to-day against the Temperance Reform. All know how even the very words of Christ himself, in the 16th Chapter of Matthew, are used to prop up the throne of the Papal rule. But I refer now to the passages that have to do with the support of the King and the Master, as it has been supposed. There is a kinship in all these questions. At the root it is not man against woman as some take it in their talk about the despotism of the 'lords of creation.' There is no call for crimination and re-crimination. Man has been as cruel to his fellow-man, as man has ever been to woman. It is altogether "man's inhumanity to man." Sin has cursed the world, and force, brute force has wronged the weak; and women have availed themselves of this, as well as men, and have joined in crushing their sisters. They do it to-day. Man and woman both fell, Christ Jesus is the remedy for the fall for man, that is for male and for female. As to the misuse of the Word of God to which I have referred, I have in mind especially the two subjects of the political rights, and the natural rights of man. A reference to these is the more pertinent, because in the lands of which I have spoken, in treating of the status of woman, Greece, Rome and India, there has been the invasion of both these classes of rights. As for the former, what a history has been that of the "divine right of kings," among heathen and Christian peoples! Volumes have been written concerning this. What life in Christian lands has the doctrine of "passive obedience and non-resistance," had even in the late Christian centuries! Our forefathers in Scotland suffered under this yoke of the kings supported by the bishops, under the Stuart dynasty, until under oppression they came, not to hate the Word of God but in studying it, to understand the passages the bishops quoted, especially that one: "The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation;" and *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, and Samuel Rutherford's *Lex Rex* show that light came to them; and their thinking has done good to the world. They were not driven as the French who were not possessed of Bibles in their homes but received only what their Romish teachers gave them,

so that when their manhood rebelled against the oppression of the Bourbon line, they threw off religion as well as the yoke of their kings. What is the fact to-day as to man's political rights and all the passages brought up by the bishops? We are satisfied under a Republican government as to all that is written in the Word as to kings and obedience to them. We have light.

The other matter of the denial of human rights, of the natural right of man to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, has a sadder history. The ladies of Greece and Rome were served by *slaves*; so were the ladies of India, and it is not a quarter of a century since the ladies in Christian America, in this Republic, were served by slaves, and they were not always the kindest rulers. Women were as violent as any in their zeal for "the corner-stone of the Confederacy." No one needs to be "high-minded" in discussing any of these questions. We have all cause for humility. What of the relation of the Word of God to the system of slavery? The changes were rung on the words of Noah, "Cursed be Canaan," and the New Testament command, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." Abraham was held up as a slave-owner. Paul was represented as returning Onesimus to bondage, a more valuable slave because a Christian, thus doing a favor to Philemon by converting his slave to Christ. I might say, this is not a thing of the past, it is a present interpretation of Scripture. It is all over now as far as of any service in the lips of the ministry, to prop up that system of iniquity that went down in the abyss of war, but it is not dead yet. A southern clergyman urged the revisers of the Bible to be faithful, and to translate *doulos* slave. They did not do it, but they did put *bond-servant* in the Margin in strange connections as a rendering of it. Paul is a "bond-servant" of God, (Titus 1: 1) and so on, though the Greek *doulos* passed into Hebrew usage to render the free service of an Israelite. (See in LXX, Eccl. 5: 12, "The sleep of a *laboring man (doulou)* is sweet, whether he eat little or much.") The work of Conybeare and Howson, "*The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*," says, (and they, Englishmen, not poisoned one would think with American virus,) "Of all the disciples now ministering to St. Paul at Rome, none has for us a greater interest than the fugitive Asiatic slave, Onesimus. Paul wished to keep him at Rome and employ him in the service of the Gospel. Yet he would not transgress the law, nor violate the rights of Philemon, by acting in this matter without his consent," and so he returns him. Yet the Jewish law forbade the return of a fugitive. "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee." Look at the line of witnesses for liberty, in the Christian church, beginning with Jesus Christ himself, who came "to preach deliverance to the captives." (Luke 4: 18.) Paul tells us that the law is made for "the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for *men stealers*," (1 Tim. 1: 9-10,) and he directs "masters to give unto their servants that which is just and equal." (Colos. 4: 1.) Chrysostom, in the fourth century, said: "There were no slaves in the old times; for God when he formed man, made him not bond, but free. Behold, slavery came of sin. Slavery is the punishment of sin, and arose from disobedience. But when Christ appeared he removed this cause, for in Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free." Isidore of

Pelusium, soon after, said, in writing to a master, "I did not suppose that a man who loves Christ, who knows the grace which has made all men free, could still hold a slave." Augustine likewise wrote, "The Christian dare not regard a slave as his property, like a horse or silver." Whatever views may be held by any divines in other churches as to the attitude of the Bible to Slavery, as if it recognized property in man, the Reformed Presbyterian Church long ago reached a conclusion that the Bible stamped it as a sin, and in 1800, the Presbytery, then the highest court of our church in the United States, declared that "no slaveholder should be allowed the communion of the church." We have definite and decided views as to man's natural and political rights. Whoever will may tarry in the darkness. The age is against them. This year the slaves of Brazil have been freed without a Civil War. This point has been reached. Property in man is condemned. What of this "spirit of the age?" Is it a part of that anti-Christ, that is setting itself against all order and government? or is it in these matters of liberty, liberty for woman as well, part of the development of the world under Christ? When we recall the attitude of our church on man's political and natural rights, and that in this matter now on hand, the result was reached without any angry discussion, and with such a majority, we must attribute it to our training in a "free school," under Christ. To many questions of the bearing of the Word of God on the customs of human society, we must say with the Saviour, when questioned, "From the beginning, it was not so." "He which made them in the beginning made them male and female." The record as to man is, "In the image of God, created he him; male and female created he them." Whatever you deny to another that you claim for yourself, you must deny on a sure warrant. Your warrant to prohibit must be clear.

In some such frame of mind, with a desire to know, we open the Bible inquiring, should a *woman* be ordained a deacon? W. Lindsay Alexander, in his edition of *Kitto's Cyclopædia*, makes short work of the question, and his views are widely held, "That in the early church there were females who were officially set apart for certain duties under the title of deaconesses seems beyond doubt; but whether such were found in the churches of the apostolic age is very doubtful. The grounds for the affirmatives are extremely slender. Phœbe is called a *diakonos* of the church at Cenchrea; and Paul specifies certain qualifications which were to be required before a widow was taken into the number (as is alleged) of deaconesses. On such evidence nothing can be built. The former passage proves nothing as to any *official* status held by Phœbe in the church; for aught the word teaches, she may have been the door-keeper or cleaner of the place where the church assembled. The latter passage is made to bear on the subject only by assuming the thing to be proved; not a word does Paul say in it of deaconesses; he says, certain widows are not to be received "into the number" without saying of what. The context can alone determine that, and as he is speaking there of those who are to receive pecuniary aid from the church, the conclusion to which we are naturally led is, that "the number" to which he refers is the number of those who were to be so aided. To assume in the face of this that "the number" referred to is the number of office-bearers of a certain class is illegit-

imate; and to make this assumption for the purpose of *proving* that such an office existed in the church, is to set all logic at defiance. To these arguments, some add the reference in 1 Timothy 3: 11, &c., to *gunaike*s, and Titus 2: 3, to *presbutides*, as intimating the existence of deaconesses in the church; but in the former case the parties referred to are probably, as the authorized version gives it, the wives of the deacons; in the latter they are undoubtedly "old women." In certain states of society and public feeling, it may be quite proper to appoint females to discharge functions which properly belong to males, but that any *institution* to this effect was made by the apostles is wholly without proof." I have quoted all that Dr. Alexander says. It is brief and covers the ground, and is decided, but it is not satisfactory. Let us now look at the Bible, specially examining the passages to which he refers. There were women in the company of Christ, Luke 8: 1-3: "And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, and the twelve were with him, and certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna and many others ministered (*dieconoun*) unto him of their substance." This is virtually the deacon's office. The apostles were the preachers of the Word. These women provided for the temporal wants of what was then Christ and his church. Judas it is true, carried the bag, but that does not nullify the force of this passage. Look again at Paul's associates, at the large list of female names at the close of the Romans, "Salute Tryphena, and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord. Greet Mary who bestowed much labor on us. Greet Priscilla, my helper in Christ Jesus." Associating her with her husband, Paul says, "Unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles."—Romans 16: 3, 4, 12.

The question is rightly stated as sent up to Synod for an answer, "Are women eligible to the deaconship? There is the office. Are women eligible to it, as well as men? Rev. Dr. Rainsford, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, had written an article on Deaconesses for the *Independent*, commenting upon which that paper asked, "Whether it would not be well to establish an order of deacons in that church; for there is in the Episcopal Church, no lay order of men whose service would correspond to that of the proposed deaconesses." The *Southern Churchman* noticed this inquiry, and lately said: "The point is well taken. The apostolic order of deacons should be restored, we have retained the name but we have virtually lost the order." Are women eligible to this order? That church does not doubt as to deaconesses. They lack the deacon, in his primitive functions. Presbyterian churches have the deacons, but lack the deaconesses. There are three passages I wish to consider. The first states the character of the women to be chosen deacons. The second relates to the matter of experience. The third gives us an instance of a woman holding the office.

I. The character of the women to be chosen deacons.

The passage, 1 Tim. 3: 8-13: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." The first thing that strikes one here is that the office of a bishop and the office of a deacon are treated of together, yet while the qualifications of bishops, and deacons and deacons' wives are given, nothing is said of the bishops' wives. This is suggestive, and prompts to inquiry. We turn to the Revised Version, and it reads in verse 11, not *their wives*, but "*Women* in like manner must be grave." The similarity of structure with the eighth verse naturally suggests the supply given, *must be*. If this be made, it seems that female deacons are meant, and not deacons' wives; as *their* is not given, it is not *their* wives. Our Bible has that word in Italics, because it is supplied. Then as verse 12 still speaks of deacons, it seems, the male and the female—the man and the woman—are in the same office. There is one class, deacons, who may be men or women. This is the easiest and plainest explanation, and objections to it must be from other considerations, from ideas of the disability of sex. Other explanations, as joining verse 11 to verse 9, and governing the word for "women" by "having" in the latter verse, *having wives*, thus making a parenthesis of verse 10, are complicated. Thus Bengel construes the passage. Another explanation is that deacons' wives are mentioned because they could and should help their husbands in their work, but a bishop's, that is, a pastor's wife, could not take part in his work, and so her qualifications are not stated. But after all, this explanation concedes the point, unless one holds to it, that sex is such a disability that in no case can a woman hold any office, though she can do all the work that has to be done. Here, again, we are on the broad sea of discussion as to the disability of sex. We take it, then, that at Ephesus, a Grecian city, Timothy was instructed what qualifications women called into church service must have. The church needed their services. If called, then, into service, nothing preventing when the need appeared, then also in these days may women be called, in this time of enlarged activity.

2. The experience required. The passage, 1 Timothy 5: 3-12: "Honor widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents; for that is good and acceptable before God. Now, she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Let not a widow be taken into the number under three-score years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. But the younger widows refuse; for when they have begun to wax

wanton against Christ, they will marry; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith." There is a view of this passage, as Dr. Alexander gives it, that removes it from any place here, and that is, that it refers to widows supported by the church. But does that view answer all inquiries? Mark the qualifications of one spoken of as taken into the number, "three-score years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works, have brought up children, have lodged strangers, have washed the saints' feet, have relieved the afflicted, have diligently followed every good work." Now, we ask, must a widow, to be supported, be sixty years of age; again, must a widow, to be supported, have all these qualifications of a past efficient life? Does the passage not read rather as giving a list of qualifications for office, and is not the connection this, that of the widows supported there were a number supported, as employed? These must be persons of experience, to thus serve the church, even though dependent. The younger widows would look to marriage, as we know this was universal. The laws of Greece and of Rome have been referred to, and we see in 1st Corinthians, that Paul was asked whether it were right to remain single, and he answers at length. To-day, as then, married women, as a rule, have family duties that engage their time and strength, and prevent them from formally engaging to discharge exacting official duties. They are deacons at home, ministering in the honored place of the mother, to the best interests for time and eternity of the children—the same service unto God, when we consider its essence. A Sister of Charity or a Sister of Mercy is no more consecrated than a mother, in the sense of set apart to a holy service. There is no holier service for a woman. The Jewish Rabbis said: "God could not be everywhere, and therefore he made mothers."

3. We have an instance of a woman at Cenchrea, in the actual exercise of the deacon's office. Romans 16: 1: "I commend unto you Phœbe, our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea, that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also." The Greek is "*a deacon of the church which is at Cenchrea.*" The word *succorer* (*prostatis*) means, first, a woman set over others, then, one who cares for the affairs of others and aids them with her resources. (Thayer's *Lexicon*.) True, the word "deacon" has a general use, as well as a special, as the word "elder" has; but it can hardly, in this connection and with such amplification as to her usefulness and business, relate simply to service about the church building, as Dr. Alexander suggests. In line with the former passages, which relate to character and experience, we say, this woman was a deacon at Cenchrea. You reply, she did not have that office there. Why not? "Because a woman could not hold an office in the church." Such a declaration is only made on a broad ground of an idea as to Woman's Place, and I have shown that this idea cannot stand any longer in the way. It is not Scriptural, and it is out of harmony with our social life, in its present stage of advance.

I regard the point as settled, that experienced Christian women, at a time of life, and in circumstances, when they were free to do so, did service in official place in the early church. There was no reason why they should not. There were reasons why they should. To-day, fit-

ness does not only come late in life, but far earlier, by special education and from enlarged facilities. We see this in all lines of work. A limitation of years as to office is recognized in our civil institutions. This may not be called for now as to church office, but the requirement of fitness in spirit, capacity and training, can never be neglected. It is only right to add as tending to confirm the view which Synod has taken of the teaching of the Bible as correct that the late Council in London, of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System, held a month after Synod met, took the same position. The proof is clear of female official service after the apostolic age. No one doubts this. Pliny's Letters early show this, and church history shows it, and we know the office reappeared in some places in Reformation times. Dr. E. A. Washburn says, in *Lange's Commentary*: "It is clear that in the Greek church of the second century, the female diaconate was a most active and useful ministry. Undoubtedly this order differed in many features from the germ of the primitive day. It had become a semi-clerical office, and had its vow of ordination. No trace of this can be found in the simpler deaconess of the Pastoral Epistles. But it is not to be confounded with the later type of female celibates in the Latin church; on the contrary, it is a striking picture, that with the change from the healthy, social life of a Christian womanhood in the church to the conventual life, the order of deaconesses passed away. The just abhorrence of the Romish abuse has led the Protestant to lose sight too often of the good which may be wrought by such organized womanly charity, after the pattern, not of the convent, but of Paul's *ekklesia kat' oikon*." There is no need to speak of the fitness of women for this service. We all see how much of the organized charity of the world is connected with their work, and controlled by them. The personal contact with the poor and needy is left greatly in their hands.

Now that Woman's Work is recognized, and it takes its place under the church order, we can only hope that it will be efficiently carried on. Many, that is many *men*, on whose shoulders the obligations of church office now rest, make but little of their obligations, just as many parents neglect their solemn engagements to duties to their children. We all know how much is to be done—visiting the sick and needy, ministering to them, visiting the homes of Sabbath School children, providing raiment, aiding the general Mission work of the church. The burden and the work lie just at our door. Some may leave this work, drop it and look for more consecration under vows and in orders. Miss Muloch says: "I believe that in women, as they are placed by providence, the chief instrument of social amelioration may be found. I believe that this must begin in the centre of our own homes and not in penitentiaries and well organized sisterhoods." Again, she says: "With the exception of a few, singularly unfortunate in their natural position, I cannot imagine any woman in the best sisterhood as advantageously placed as she who keeps to *home* duties. For self-denying exercises probably nothing will equal this, though such an uncourteous suspicion may only be recognized in the depths of the heart." This is a woman's voice, and we listen to it. The work is just here in the homes and in the church home, around our doors. There is no need of sisterhoods and the habit of an Order. There may be and ought to be

schools of training for ministering, open to all. Some are now in existence, others are forming, more will follow. There is no call or warrant for the vow of celibacy. The work is free. The rule is for women as for men. Protestantism has no vow or promise of celibacy for church officers. There is to be none for women entering the service of the church. Many men even serve only for a time in church offices. As to vows in the past, Isaac Taylor says: "Just in proportion as these religionists were deeply moved by religious considerations they were extravagant, unnatural and artificial, and (it is no paradox) the more sincere they were, the less genuine." Miss Muloch says: "When any one attempts to absorb herself wholly in the endeavor to please God, she can hardly fail to concentrate every thought on the self she wishes to sacrifice." We want, then, no sisterhoods, no Orders. We wish church officers and voluntary work.

As to the results to follow the movements of our times in the advance of women into public place, one that is apprehended if we take the expressions of opinion, will not take place—the breaking up of homes. There will be no turning of the world upside down, but in this as in other concerns of the church, the gathering into one under Christ, the Head. We might hope for more energy to be given to church work. A result I should gladly see would be full co-operation between the male and female members of the church. If as deacons, why not otherwise? The dividing up of congregations into so many organizations, as we see now, does not seem to be the best way; a number of them under heads not within the church organization at all. One pastor reported in the *Presbyterian* that there were sixteen organizations in his congregation. I refer not to such an organization as the Women's Christian Temperance Union. There is a need of this, created by the non-action of men in politics, who have been governed by expediency in dealing with the Liquor Traffic. The zeal of women, out of politics, and largely for this cause, went beyond them, this subject presenting itself to them as a matter of duty only, not of expediency and party policy. But why should the members of a congregation be divided into male and female on the lines of Mission work any more than of Sabbath School work? A few men's missionary societies here and there will not remove the objection to this division. What is the cause of it? In a measure, I think, it has arisen from the growing sense in woman of individual responsibility, and a desire to do her part and to have that part felt and recognized. The result might well be then the unification of church work, with various departments, but not divided on the line of sex. There are organizations rising that seek to enroll the sons and daughters of the church under self-constituted leaders, to map out for them Christian work. Their names are catching. Speaking of one of them, the *Presbyterian* says: "It is full of promise, but this does not always mean usefulness. This will depend altogether on the way the way the promises are unfolded. If it works in subordination to the church, it will be a blessing and in turn be blessed. The majority mean only sincere work and desire to be led into opportunities to do it, and their reward will be the consciousness that it is done. But beware of doing work only suggested by it, or of attending its meetings only; rather believe in those who love the church best and have only a desire that it shall put its shoulder to the wheel to help on the church." These

are useful cautions. The whole subject of the organization by the church of its forces must be re-studied. More means must be expended, more effort put forth, right on the ground. In all this organizing, Christ Jesus is the Head, the Head of his body, the church, and in him there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, "we are all one in Christ Jesus." It took long years and much counsel to realize the first declaration. Read Acts 10th chapter, as to Peter and Cornelius, and Galatians 2d chapter and Church History for many years after that period. The second declaration is realized as a fact to-day, but hardly fully as a doctrine; the last is coming.

A few words in closing. You young gentlemen, have come here to study for the ministry of the gospel. Whatever may be said of Woman's Place and Woman's Work, none but a few Christian sects have ever set themselves against a stated, educated ministry. You have no adjustments of relation for which to wait. Your work lies right before you, on and on so long as God spares your lives. Look then to patient, prayerful study, for fitness for your work, seeking first of all the baptism of the Divine Spirit. Address yourself with energy to the study of the Word of God, seeking to know it fully, first in your own hearts, then to give it to others. Cherish the fullest sympathy with the movements going on on every hand for the benefit of mankind. Urge on both men and women that they be not only disciples of Christ, but also servants of Christ. And the working forces of God's people shall yet bring this rebellious and suffering world into the peace of God, under Christ Jesus our Lord.

CRITICISM ON PSALM II.

BY PROF. SPROULL.

In preparing a new metrical version of the Psalms it is important that in such places as through obscurity mistaken views of divine truth might be received, proper corrections be made. An instance of this is in Psalm 2: 6-7. In the authorized version, the reading is, "Yet have I set my king on my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son. This day I have begotten thee." These words, literally taken, seem to teach that the begetting of the Son was provided for in the eternal decree; a gross heresy that denies that the mutual relation of the persons of the Godhead is necessary and essential.

God the Father is the speaker in the first verses of the Psalm. He demands of nations and individuals an account of their opposition to his anointed, the Messiah. In verses 4-5 he presents the Messiah as beholding from his throne in heaven their fruitless attempts to overturn his government, and holding them in derision. They are told that he will deal with them in righteous indignation, and destroy them. And here the Father brings to view the appointment of his Son to this position. What follows is neither an adversative nor a concessive statement. The connective particle (Hebrew *vav*, usually rendered *and*), is here causative. It is so rendered, Psalm 5: 11, "Let them shout for joy, because (*vav*) thou defendest them." Psalm 60: 12, "Through