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THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

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“The Lord is risen indeed.” Luke 24: 34.

The Saviour was crucified on Friday, April 7th. He arose early Sabbath morning, April 9th. The Lord's Day was by divine appointment set apart as a commemoration of His resurrection. The anniversary of this event soon came to be observed as Easter. Dr. Schaff says: “It is most probable that it began to be observed in the apostolic age.” The Church of Rome exalted it into a holy day, and the Established Church of England has done likewise. Our forefathers in both the First and Second Reformation lifted up their protest against this and all other human inventions in the Church of Christ, as “teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.” The Puritans of Old and New England scorned the idea of tolerating in the church any ordinance that was not divinely appointed. The Churches to-day are manifesting a disposition to give up the ground occupied by the Reformers. The observance of Easter is getting to be common in the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregationalist bodies. There is no divine warrant for observing Easter day. Every Sabbath day is an Easter day. That is the day God has made. On that day the believer rejoices because “the Lord is risen indeed.” Matthew treats of the majesty and glory of the resurrection; Mark dwells upon the fact or reality of it; Luke deals with its spiritual significance, and John presents it as a test of character. Let us meditate upon Luke's thought.

I. *The Resurrection of Christ is the climax of His miraculous life.* There are about forty miracles recorded as performed by our Lord, while we are assured that these are only a small part of those actually wrought. There were three raised from the dead—the daughter of Jairus, shortly after death, “the only son of a widow,” whose

Church's Head, and while the Head is above water the body is safe. "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their king and triumphantly exclaim, The Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our King; He will save us." Soon the angel will fly in the midst of the heavens, proclaiming, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

THE DEACONS' OFFICE*.

BY THE REV. J. C. K. MILLIGAN, NEW YORK.

The question is asked: What is the nature of the deacon's office? What are the functions which Scripture assigns to the deacon? Three general views are advocated: That the office is wholly spiritual, a subordinate gospel ministry; that it is limited to the care of the poor; and that the management of all the financial interests of the congregation, by which they are chosen, belongs to them.

The first view, that the deacon's office is a spiritual ministry, involves the unreasonable supposition that her Divine Head established the Church in the world without a complete organization, and left her destitute of any provision for her temporal support, unless in union with and dependent upon the state. Thus the New Testament Church would be less fitted to maintain herself among the Pagan governments which were hostile, than the Old Testament Church was in the midst of the Jewish nation, whose citizens and rulers were identified with and friendly to her. Dr. Schaff says of Acts vi, "That this refers to deacons, we know from the terms, *Diakonia*, *Diakonein*, *Trapezais*, used to describe their office, and from almost universal exegetical tradition." But the occasion of the election of those mentioned there, was complaints of the Grecians that their poor widows were neglected in the pecuniary distributions; and the Apostles assigned for the institution this reason, Acts vi. 2-4: "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables; wherefore look ye out among you seven men whom we may appoint over this business, but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Here the express antithesis separates the business of the tables over which the first deacons were appointed from the spiritual ministry of the Word of God. The fact that two of these deacons, Stephen and Philip, afterwards performed spiritual functions is less strange than that Peter and John, humble fishermen, became Apostolic fishers of men; the promised reward of fidelity is just this promotion, 1 Tim. iii. 13. And the high spiritual character of those who fill the office; is only in keeping with the fruits of the Spirit promised to all private Christians, and with the diligent adding to faith of

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virtue, knowledge, temperance, of which it is said: "He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off."

The second view, that the deacon's office is limited to the care of the poor, like the former, leaves the Church without a distinct and complete organization; and the two mutually refute each other. It provides a financial office to attend to the Church's poor, to manage money for the *bodily* comfort and the supply of the physical wants of a small proportion of the members of the Church; but it leaves her without an officer to manage the money which is to provide houses of worship, to sustain the ministry, to provide means for the supply of the spiritual wants of all her membership, and to send out the gospel into the great heathen world. This theory is contrary to the evident order of the Old Testament Church, which by its Levites gathered and distributed only a third-year tithe for the poor, but an annual tithe for the support of the Priests and Levites, and the maintenance of their religious observances. Our Lord, in His model organization of the disciples for His public ministry, appointed a Treasurer, not only "that he should give something to the poor," but that prior to this he might "buy those things that *we* have need of against the feast." John xiii. 29. Then the language of the institution is "tables," and not *table*, implying distinct and separate objects to be provided for. In Acts iv. 35, we are told that the Apostolic "distribution was made unto *every man*, according as he had need," which certainly included the Apostles, who from the first of Christ's ministry had been thus provided for, probably included every constant worker, and for a time may have included the whole multitude of disciples. But the result of their appointment is declared, verse 6, and makes no reference to the relief of the poor or the satisfaction of the widows, which we would justly expect if this were their sole business; but it is that "the Word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of *the priests* were obedient to the faith." This implies that the constitution of this office, directly contributed to the efficiency of the ministry, provided means for the wider dissemination of the gospel, and specially gave encouragement to the priests to forsake the well-filled storehouses of the Temple, and to transfer their services to Christianity, which now, with officers set formally over the business, made sure provision for the support of the ministerial class. Paul also evidently connects and identifies the arrangement of this matter in the two dispensations when he says, 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14: "As they which minister about holy things live of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar, even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." This, "even so," would not be true without an organized system for ministerial support and specific officers for its management and the sameness of manner which it expresses

would be wanting if these officers did not also provide for the poor, and for all the services of the sanctuary.

The third view, that the deacon is to manage all the finances of the Church, is confirmed by all that has been said, and is generally accepted among Presbyterians as the true theory. But there are many who practically ignore the office, and impose its duties upon the ministers and elders whom they were appointed to relieve, or commit them to officers who are not responsible to the Church, are not named in Scripture, but are the offspring of an unholy union of the Church and the State. There is, therefore, need to show that the office is instituted in divine wisdom and authority, has committed to it all the finances of the Church, and is the best provision possible for their successful management.

1. *In the Old Testament the whole affairs of the Church were managed by her own officers.* The ecclesiastical organization was limited to the tribe of Levi, which by inspired directions and pattern was separated and consecrated to the service of the Lord in connection with the tabernacle and temple. Every part of this service was minutely apportioned among the Levite families by divine prescription. Aaron and his sons were called of God to the *priestly* functions; the Kohathites, their near kindred, were divinely assigned to the special assistance of the priests in attending to *the more sacred* vessels and duties; and the families of Gershon and Merari were as specifically assigned with oxen and wagons to the *less sacred* vessels and duties. The awful doom which Jehovah himself inflicted upon Korah, Dathan and Abiram, upon Uzzah, and upon Uziah, are expressly placed on record as beacons of warning against the intrusion into any of these functions of any other than Levites, and those called thereto by the divine order; and in the light of God's unchangeable character they are a danger signal against every taker of official duty in the Church, except her regular officers who are "called of God as was Aaron." Samuel, David, Solomon, and Ezra, by special inspiration, adapted these arrangements to the altered conditions of the Church; but the smiting of Uziah is a standing condemnation of the idea that the theocracy of Israel was a union of Church and State in any sense that permitted royal interference with the priestly function, and the death of Uziah rebuked David for an unauthorized change even in so small a matter as *the manner of transporting the Ark* from Gibeah to Jerusalem. The Church then managed all her temporalities by her own officers; and what the king did ordinarily was only in the way of royal liberality and efficient co-operation, in conformity to her law and divinely prescribed order.

2. *The New Testament order was established by the Son of God through His inspired Apostles.* The Apostles were called to their office directly by Himself, and none might enter it without an immediate call. These, taught by the Master, and filled with His Spirit,

gave form and organization to the Church. Until the ordination of the seven deacons, the Apostles managed all the Church finances; for we are told that the monies donated, and the price of lands and houses sold, "were laid at the Apostles' feet," which denotes the complete submission of them to their disposal. When this burdened the Apostles with minor cares, and prevented entire devotion to the ministry of the word, or gave dissatisfaction because attended to by irregular subordinates, they did not helplessly ask the State for civil trustees, nor leave it to the discretion of the uninspired congregation; but guided by the Spirit of God, they promptly provide a class of officers, to whom is expressly committed the service of tables, or all that the Apostles had been conducting except the "ministry of the word." The almost unanimous testimony of expositors is to the effect that the tables included all the secular and financial affairs of the Church, or as Hooker expresses it; "The deacons were stewards of the Church, unto whom at first were committed the distribution of Church goods, the care of providing therewith for the poor, and the charge to see that things of expense might be religiously and faithfully dealt in." This arrangement was carried out in all the churches; for they are mentioned in Rome, Philippi, and Corinth, instructions are given to Timothy and Titus in regard to their election and qualifications, and those who visited the churches are charged to "set in order the things that are wanting in every city." Thus in the lifetime of the inspired Apostles, under their immediate directions, and with the evident sanction of the Lord Jesus, the churches received a complete organization. As in the Old Testament, this included different classes of officers for spiritual and secular duties, with definite designation and distinct separation to the specified functions of each, and so covering the whole sphere of ecclesiastical need that the Church is still independent of State help, and free from State control. And surely if Moses' temporary order could not be infringed upon without terrible judgments from God, this permanent order set up by the Son of God ought not rashly to be departed from, nor set aside for any other.

3. *Reason and experience demand that the Church finances shall be managed by the Scriptural and ecclesiastical deacon rather than by the unscriptural civil trustee.* Even though we admit that the deacon is not authoritatively and formally required, the example of Jesus and His inspired Apostles is the highest wisdom, and a supreme law. No men are so likely to be liberal, wise and faithful financiers for the Church as those who have publicly consecrated themselves to the Lord in confession of His name, who have been selected by the prayerful choice of their brethren, and who have been inducted into office solemnly in the name of the Lord Jesus, with vows of loyalty and fidelity to Him, and with the impartation of the Holy Ghost in answer to prayer and the laying on of hands. The deacon is a member of the Church, is personally and officially under the authoritative guidance and con-

trol of the session and higher Church courts, is under the most solemn obligations to act for the glory of Christ, the welfare of the Church, and the advancement of the Gospel; if he fail or break his oath, he is at once amenable to the Church court, and ceases to have power to act. A trustee need not be a member of the Church, in his office he is not controlled by the Church, and if he abuses his trust, he is only removable by a civil action before the civil courts. The trustee is a remnant of Popery and the dark ages. In the days of Constantine the Church began to lean upon emperors and kings, and quickly her history became one of declension, worldly conformity, and of intellectual, moral, and spiritual darkness, until in the development of the Papacy, she became alternately the tyrant of kings and the victim of royal supremacy. The glory of the Reformations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been limited and tarnished by the unbelieving acceptance of State support and control, which kept the Church still under the feet of the Gentiles; so that almost the only spiritual life, gospel efficiency, and fulfillment of Church purposes are to be found in the dissenting churches, and in these in proportion, as they maintain a separate and independent existence. Our American Churches have only this trusteeship as a remnant and badge of former slavery; but it is not possible for a Church to be and act independent and sovereign in her own proper sphere, when she cannot legally hold church property, support the ministry, or do any financial business without State appointed trustees, who are not governed by Church law, are not inaugurated by nor subject to the Church courts, and in many cases are not even communicants at the table of the Lord. When the deacons are trustees, as now they may legally be in any Presbyterian congregation in the State of New York, they have all the requisite powers and limitations which the State prescribes, have the higher qualification of being professedly Christian men "full of the Holy Ghost," are directly responsible to the session and to the congregation through them, and are fully under their guidance and direction for the spiritual interests and welfare of the congregation.

THANKSGIVING ANN.

BY KATE W. HAMILTON.

In the kitchen doorway, underneath its arch of swaying vines and dependent purple clusters, the old woman sat, tired and warm, vigorously fanning her face with her calico apron. It was a dark face, surmounted by a turban, and wearing, just now, a look of troubled thoughtfulness not quite in accordance with her name—a name oddly