

**WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE : A
LECTURE DELIVERED IN THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH OF DENVER,
COLORADO, FEBRUARY 6, 1877**

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Woman's suffrage : a lecture delivered in the Catholic Church of Denver, Colorado, February 6, 1877 by J. P. Machebeuf

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J. P. MACHEBEUF

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WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE.

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED IN THE

Catholic Church of Denver, Colorado,

—BY—

Joseph Machebeuf
RT. REV. J. P. MACHEBEUF,

VICAR APOS. OF COLORADO,

—+ FEBRUARY 6, 1877. +—



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A few weeks ago, I closed a sermon on DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES, by a few remarks on Woman's Suffrage. A request was made by fifty-seven Members of the Legislature to repeat the lecture. I cheerfully complied with the request on Sunday, Feb. 4. It is now offered to an impartial public for consideration, before the question of granting the privilege of suffrage to women is presented to the voters of the State.

+ JOS. P. MACHEBEUF,
Vicar Apos. of Colorado.

DENVER, February 6, 1877.

LECTURE.

"I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man and the head of Christ is God; * * * the woman is the glory of the man, for the man was not created for the woman but the woman for the man."—(1st Cor. xi, 13).

Beloved brethren, so much has been said of late, here in Denver, about woman's rights, so many meetings held, so many speeches made by women in churches, I could find no more appropriate occasion to consider if the proceedings which have been going on for the last few weeks, the extravagant claims made by them be consistent with the teaching of the Bible. There is a class of

LIBERAL CHRISTIANS

Who talk very loudly about the Bible, and pretend to follow the Bible, but during those long meetings, in those great speeches, did the friends of woman's rights follow the Bible? Did they consult it? Did they quote any portion of it in defense of their claims? I am afraid not; if they did not, I will.

Those strong minded women who are not satisfied with the disposition of Providence, and who wish to go beyond the condition of their sex, profess, no doubt, to be Christians. It would not be a good policy, in addressing the fair, gentle and pious sex to deny the authority of the Bible. As Christians then, they must admit the obligation to obey the law of God. What are the duties imposed upon women by the divine law? "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore, as the church is subject to Christ, so also let women be to their husbands in all things."—(St. Paul to Eph. v. 22).

"I will therefore, that men pray in every place * * * In like manner the women also, in decent apparel, adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety, not with plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly attire, but as it becometh women professing Godliness with good works. Let the women learn in silence, with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over man, but to be in silence, (not an easy task) for Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not seduced, but the woman being

seduced, was in the transgression; yet she shall be saved through child bearing, if she continue in faith and love and sanctification in sobriety."—(I. Tim. ii. 8).

"But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God. * * * * * The woman is the glory of the man; for the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man."—(Cor. Ist, xi 3).

"Let the women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted them to speak, but to be subject, as the law saith. But, if they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church."—(Cor. Ist, xiii 34).

With such sacred authority, how can Christian women be justified in endeavoring to destroy the order established by Providence? After God had created man in his own image, he said: "It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself." Had God intended to create a companion capable of following the same pursuits, able to undertake the same labors, which evidently are the destiny of man, he would have created another man. But, no; He made a woman, and, after the fall of that woman, He said to her: "I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions; in sorrow shall thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall rule over thee:" God was angry because Adam hearkened to the voice of his wife. Then God in his wrath called Adam and Eve, conscience-stricken and trembling with fear before him; words of menace issued from his mouth, a curse that involved the whole world in the sin of man; "accursed be the earth in thy work!" He had nothing to tell but to pronounce a fearful sentence of punishment and of death; "dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." A body, a brow bathed in daily sweat, a heart bruised with daily affliction; nor was the woman, the weaker vessel, spared in that day of wrath, as she was the first to sin, she was also the first to be punished. In pain and writhing and groaning, should she bring forth the fruit of her womb.

Terrible punishment, no doubt, but let us consider the divine precept transgressed; the honor, dignity, glory, omnipotence of God involved in the observance of the precept, and violated in its transgression. Now I would ask those strong minded women who have the temerity, the presumption to interfere with the just dispensation of an omnipotent God. Since that dreadful sentence has been pronounced, had not the millions who have lived from the beginning of the world to this day to submit to its frightful consequences? Is there any power on earth which can dispense man from the hard labor which brings the sweat on his brow? Is there any authority in this world which can relieve woman from sorrows and groaning in her child-bearing? In this nineteenth century, called the age of progress, of great inventions, have any of those proud scientific men discovered any process to escape that condemnation to death? The sad experience of every day proves that the justice of that offended God is still in full force, and shall continue until time shall be no more. But if

man is still compelled to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; if woman has still to suffer the same sorrows; if all mankind, woman as well as man, have still to suffer that same penalty of death, how could woman, who has brought sin, misery and death into the world, pretend to rebel against the just sentence of that same God she has offended? No, beloved brethren, that terrible condemnation must have its accomplishment for all, to the end of time. "Thou shalt be under thy husband's power, he shall rule over thee."

In order to shake off this weight of sacred authority, the vain attempt is made to insinuate that the important and salutary instructions of St. Paul to the married couple, on their respective and essential duties, were not universal, but only of partial and temporary application. Is it not astonishing, even outrageous, that in this professedly Christian country, the only mention made of the sacred word of God by the friends of women's rights, in defense of their weak and extravagant cause, is only to deny its divine authority! What a convenient and (allow me the expression) elastic kind of doctrine! How liberal! By following this principle, we might as well say, too, that the ten commandments given in the old law to Moses, and promulgated to the people of God, although confirmed in the new law and brought to their perfection by our blessed Saviour, were not universal, but only partial and of a temporary application. Of course, in this age of progress, the people are now so intelligent that they must have discovered a new and easier way to go to heaven than by believing and keeping the commandments. As every city has its Broadway, they suppose, no doubt, that there must be one also to go to heaven. I wonder if there are any comfortable street cars on that Broadway to heaven!

But, unfortunately, our Divine Master who came down from heaven, and who must know the safest way to it, tells us: "Enter ye at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. * * * * How narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it!" (Math. vii, 13-14.) They are no doubt of the same loose and liberal opinion, those who are guilty of so many frauds and robberies nowadays in the high, as well as in the low ranks of society, and the higher the rank the bigger the frauds.

A moment's reflection will convince any sincere inquirer after truth that

THE MORAL LESSONS TAUGHT

To the married couple are only a consequence of that decision of the great, impartial and omnipotent Judge before whom all will have to appear and give account of the use of their reason and other faculties. "He that shall believe and be baptized shall be saved; he that shall not believe, shall be condemned." "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Here is the only safe way.

Another vain effort is made to justify the presumptuous and sacrilegious intrusion of the female sex into the sanctuary, and their bold attempt to preach without a shadow of authority and faculty. "Faith cometh by hearing," saith St. Paul, not by reading, as the defenders

of private judgment assume, unless they fall back on that easy way of rejecting every authority of the Holy Scripture. That rule they say is not universal, it is only partial and of temporary application. "How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach unless they be sent?" (Rom. x. 15-17.)

Hear now how the order established by St. Paul for the decency of divine service is destroyed by a strange mode of explaining away his salutary instructions: "Let women keep silent in churches, commands the sacred writer, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

In answer to it, a great display of erudition is made to tell us, with much solemnity, that the meaning of these words is that women should not speak nonsense in the church. Although the subject is of the greatest importance, we cannot restrain a smile of pity for such a silly and absurd interpretation or rather profanation of the wisdom of God. Does it require the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to tell us that women should not speak nonsense, in the church? A child would tell us that neither women nor men should speak or write nonsense, not only in the church but in any place, or at any time. What a poor compliment is paid to you, ladies, by this strange explanation of the Holy Scripture? It would suppose that the ladies are in need of such advice, or at least that some of them are inclined to speak nonsense. (Now ladies, be not angry with me for repeating these words.) They are not mine, they have been used as an argument in favor of woman's rights. How true it is that it requires a skillful lawyer to defend a bad cause! and any one who has looked over the report of those speeches by ladies in a church, would wish that another Paul would come to Denver to repeat the advice. It might be very useful to some.

But before we warn you against the dreadful effects which would surely result from this strange movement, let us examine

WHAT CLASS OF WOMEN

Are the leaders of those pretended woman's rights, I will not say in Colorado, but in the large cities of the East; I said, in my first lecture: "Some old maids, disappointed in love," but ladies, better informed, answer for me: Battalions of old maids, disappointed in getting husbands of any sort; women separated from their husbands, or divorced by men of sacred obligations imposed by God himself; "what God has joined together let no man put assunder." (Matth. xix 6.) Women who, although married, are discontented and wish to improve their condition by holding the reins of the family government, for, it is remarked, that there never was a woman happy in her home, who wished for female suffrage." "Just notice what I say," replies another lady; "the leaders in the beginning were unmarried or divorced women, many of them spiritualists and free-lovers." How respectable! Women without any family, who seem to be tied down to the sacred duty of what they call the drudgery of mothers; women who, too often, manage, (God knows by what means, by what unnatural crimes,) to be relieved from the cares of a family. Such women desire the world to think that they pos-

ness masculine power. If so, are they willing and able to till the land, work in the mines, build railroads, work as laborers? Are they willing and able to enlist as volunteers in time of war, form regiments of Amazons, shoulder the musket, camp in the field, and fight the battles of their country?

WOMEN AND THE POLLS.

How absurd and repugnant to the feeling of respect we all have for the gentle sex, to think of a woman leaving her household duties to go to the polls, to attend long and animated political meetings, women's conventions, to sit as a jury woman! How can we suppose even, without blushing, that a woman could be elected for the office of police magistrate, constable, or sheriff? Who will take charge of those young children, (if they consent to have any), whilst that lady doctor is attending her patients, that lady surgeon is operating indiscriminately upon the unfortunate victims of our weekly, almost daily, terrible disasters on railroads, on steamers, or in the mines? Who will watch over the more advanced children, chiefly that young daughter, whilst that female lawyer is defending a criminal case, that female judge is sitting on the bench, obliged, perhaps, by justice, to pronounce a sentence of condemnation? The husband, of course, must attend to these family duties, the merchant must leave his store, the lawyer his office, the mechanic his shop, the farmer his plough, to go home and nurse the baby! How absurd and contrary to nature!

But we are told that women have settled this question very practically. Yes, the question is solved by going around it, not by answering it, just like a boy who has said or done anything wrong, when he sees his father coming to him with a nice little rod in his hand, he is not very anxious to discuss the question; the only way to settle it, is to go round the stove or the table, until he finds a door opened to run away. So the question is solved practically. They say: "When we want to go to church we leave our baby with another woman for an hour or two, and when we go to the polls we intend to do the same." But the question is not about going to church: no great difficulty on this point. Surely, no kind husband could refuse on the Lord's day, when every class of business is stopped, and he is at home, to assist his beloved wife as far as he can, in the little family duties, even in nursing the baby, when he is old enough to be taken from the mother's breast, so as to give her an opportunity of attending to one of the services of the church, reserving for himself to go to some other service. It is even a consolation for him to spend a short time with his dear little children, from whom he is separated all the week, except at meal time or at night when, being tired, after his day's work, he cannot enjoy the same comfort and satisfaction, but on Sunday, having all the day to himself, he feels happy to play with the little ones, to embrace and caress them at leisure, to teach those that are old enough to receive any instruction; but even then, as it is not his natural duty, he will soon be tired of it, will perhaps get impatient waiting for the mother, chiefly when the baby is crying; and if the sermon is too long, the poor wife may