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ARTICLE I.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OFFICE OF DEACON.

The particular topic to which we shall direct attention is *the Importance of the Office of Deacon*. But before proceeding to its immediate discussion, we shall offer some preliminary remarks in regard to the timeliness and desirableness of considering the whole subject of the diaconate.

1. It has not unfrequently been said, that the age in which we live is peculiarly called upon, in the providence of God, to take up Church-questions and subject them to a careful examination. There is truth in this remark, if it be received with necessary qualification. No doubt, it is the duty of every age to study the whole counsel of God as revealed in his inspired word. But there are peculiar circumstances connected with the Church, at particular times, which compel her attention to certain articles of faith and principles of order. Conflicts arise in consequence of the propagation of error, which necessitate a thorough investigation of the truth which is challenged, and a sharp and definite statement of true in contrast with false doctrine. And as every error is not circulated in every age, but particular heresies prevail at particular seasons, the result is that the special form of truth which is related to the prevalent type of false opinion, requires to be precisely fixed. It is in this way that the theology

## ARTICLE V.

## THE REVISED DIRECTORY FOR WORSHIP.

The revised "Form of Government" and "Book of Discipline" having been adopted with great unanimity by the Presbyteries, the Assembly of 1879, to which that result was reported, determined to continue the "Committee of Revision," with instructions to revise our present "Directory for Worship."

This Committee reported a "Revised Directory" to the late General Assembly, whereupon the following action was taken by that body:

*Resolved*, That the Report of the Committee on the Revision of the Directory for Worship be accepted and recommitted to the same Committee, with permission to have a sufficient number of copies printed at the expense of the General Assembly, and that a copy of the same be forwarded to each minister of this Church, and two copies to each Session; also two copies to each Stated Clerk of Presbyteries, with a request that the same be critically examined by each Presbytery, and the result of such examination and criticism be forwarded to the Chairman of said Committee on Revision, for their use in making a report to the next General Assembly."

This action of the Assembly was substantially that recommended by the Committee in their Report; their object being to secure a revised Directory which should be the work, not of a Committee, but of the whole Church, as the new Book of Church Order is.

The Revised Directory for Worship, as reported by the Committee, is now before the Church "for examination and criticism." As the object of the action of the late General Assembly is to secure for the book a thorough and intelligent criticism, with such suggestions for alteration and amendment as the Presbyteries may see fit to make, it will not be thought out of place for a member of the Committee to state briefly the principles which guided them in their work, and to call attention to the particulars in which the Revised Directory differs from the old.

Dr. Thornwell in his published defence of what is now our "Book of Church Order," as it was first reported to the General

Assembly, besides claiming for it a more logical arrangement than that of the old Book, specifies as among the changes introduced, (1) "the lopping off of redundancies," and (2) the supply of omissions. The same claims we make on behalf of the Revised Directory now before the Presbyteries.

As instances of the "lopping off of redundancies," we mention : The entire omission of Chapter X., "On the Mode of Inflicting Church Censures." Our old Book of Discipline, while it specified the "censures" which might be inflicted by church courts, gave no definitions of these censures. Hence the necessity of such a chapter in the Directory for Worship. It was from this chapter alone that the nature of these "censures" could be learned. Our new Book has supplied this deficiency. In Chapter IV. of the "Rules of Discipline," the several church "censures" are clearly defined; and certainly the Book of Discipline, and not the Directory for Worship, is the proper place for such definitions; and so, the necessity for this chapter disappears. Chapter I., "On the Sanctification of the Lord's Day," is not retained as a distinct chapter. But so much of it as properly belongs to a Directory for Worship is retained in Article I. of the Chapter on "Public Worship on the Lord's Day." The sanctification of the Lord's day is a subject of great importance, and there is need that our standards give forth no "uncertain sound" respecting it. But the Confession of Faith (see Ch. XXI.) and the Larger Catechism (see Ans. 116-121) treat fully of this matter. And to introduce a brief and necessarily imperfect summary of this teaching in the Directory can have no other effect than to weaken the impression made by the full statement contained in its proper place in the Confession of Faith and Catechism. So, in the chapters on Baptism and Marriage, instead of giving a brief and necessarily imperfect statement of the truth respecting the proper subjects of baptism, and the laws of marriage, such as the present Directory contains, the reader is referred for information on these points to the full and excellent expositions contained in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

As instances of "the supply of omissions," we may mention the Articles on Sabbath-schools Prayer-meetings, and the Fo

eign Missionary work of the Church, as that work stands related to her worship. At the time our present Directory was adopted, Sabbath-schools, and what are distinctively called Prayer-meetings, were unknown in our Church, and she had not then awakened to her duties and responsibilities with respect to the great work of Foreign Missions. Hence that Directory contains no notice of them whatsoever. Now all is changed. Sabbath-schools and Prayer-meetings are regarded by all as important agencies in the accomplishment of the Church's work in the world. In our new Book of Church Order, among the duties of church Sessions, that of "establishing and controlling Sabbath-schools and Bible classes" is specifically mentioned, and Presbyteries and General Assemblies are accustomed to exercise a particular supervision of this work. In such circumstances it seems eminently proper that a Directory for Worship should contain, at the least, some general direction respecting the way in which these services should be conducted.

A more important change than those just mentioned—as most will probably regard it—is the introduction into the Revised Directory of certain "Forms" for the administration of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc. These are intended, as is expressly stated, (1) "as an exposition of the nature of the service; and (2) as furnishing a suitable pattern for such service, which may or may not be used, at the discretion of the officiating minister."

"The Churches of the Reformation have treated the subject of public worship according to four different methods.

"The first is that of an *imposed* ritual, responsive in its character, and prescribed to the minister and people for their common use. Such is the practice of the Anglican and Lutheran communions.

"Another method is that of a *discretionary* ritual, not responsive, and supplied to the minister alone, for his guidance as to the matter and manner of worship; leaving freedom of variation, as to the latter, according to his judgment. Such was the usage of the Church of Scotland for the first century of her existence; such is the practice of every Reformed Church on the continent of Europe at the present time.

“The third method is that of a *rubrical* provision; consisting of directions without examples; indicating the subjects, but omitting the language of prayer. Of this character was the Directory composed by the Westminster Assembly, and adopted by our Church.

“And the fourth method, if such we may call it, is that of *entire freedom*, as respects both subject and language; leaving all to the option of the minister. Perhaps no denomination has followed this course since the days of the old Independents, who opposed even the introduction of a Directory of Worship, as hampering the liberty of the individual.” (*Eutaxia*, pp. 8, 9.)

The adoption of the first of these methods, viz., that of an imposed prescriptive liturgy, admitting of no variation, will find few, if any, advocates in the Presbyterian Churches of this country; certainly it had none among the members of the Committee which has prepared the Revised Directory. The last-mentioned method, that of entire freedom, leaving all to the option of the minister would, we believe, be as unanimously rejected as inconsistent with the apostolic injunction, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. xiv. 40). The only methods which find favor among us are—the third, *i. e.*, “a rubrical provision, consisting of directions without examples,” and this is the character of our present Directory; and the second, that is, “discretionary forms” prepared for the use of the minister only when, and so far as, he may see fit to use them. The Revised Directory combines these two methods. There is no liturgy, or Form of Worship, proposed for the public service of the sanctuary; here the instruction is rubrical, and in this it differs from the method pursued by the Reformed (Dutch) and Huguenot Churches; it is only in the administration of the sacraments, and for certain special occasions that “forms” are proposed.

The objection most frequently urged against our use of even *discretionary* forms is, that for us it would be an imitation of the practice of other Churches; and that “the dignity of our Church, to say nothing of individual self-respect, would suffer by such imitation.”

In reply we say, (1) So far is such a use of forms an imitation

of other Churches on the part of the Presbyterian Church, it is, in fact, but a return to her original usage, following upon her revival at the Reformation. For the first century our mother Church, the Church of Scotland, had "an order of worship, liturgical in its character," and the Reformed (Dutch) and Huguenot Churches, as thoroughly Presbyterian as our own, retain such liturgies to the present day. (2) As a matter of fact, several books of forms for use in baptism, etc., have been prepared and published by ministers of the Presbyterian Church in this country. *e. g.*, that of Dr. A. A. Hodge, of Princeton; and these books are largely used among us, especially by our younger ministers. These are, some of them, very good books; but we believe that one better than any of them will be secured if the Church herself takes the matter in hand; and so the collective piety and wisdom of the many be substituted for that of the few.

Among the Forms proposed the reader will notice that there is no Form or "Office" for use in the burial of the dead, excepting a very brief one "which may be used at sea, or when no minister is present to conduct the service." The reason for this will appear if we examine the liturgies of any of the Churches which have undertaken to provide a form for use on such occasions—take that of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, for example.

As an "Order for the burial of the dead" Christian, or one who in the judgment of charity is a Christian, it is scriptural and most appropriate, with one exception, *viz.*, the repetition of the Lord's Prayer at the grave—evidently the Romish Pater-noster—one of the remnants of Romanism of which "the Prayer-book was never thoroughly purged." But it is confessedly altogether inappropriate at the burial of any other than a Christian; and in many a case it cannot be used without "associating the hopes of the Christian with the close of an obviously Christless life." We say it is *confessedly* so, for the rubric which accompanies it in the Book of Common Prayer is in the words, "The office ensuing is not to be used for any unbaptized adult, or any who die excommunicate, or who have laid violent hands on themselves." This rubric was evidently intended to forbid the use of this ser-

vice at the burial of any but such as are, in the judgment of charity, Christians. Without stopping to criticise the terms in which this is done, we ask—

What must be the practical effect of adopting such a form, with such a rubric as this? Obviously, it will require the minister, if he means conscientiously to do his duty in every instance in which he is called upon to bury a dead person, to sit in judgment upon the Christian character of the deceased, and to proclaim that judgment, too, by reading or refusing to read the service at the funeral. This very few are willing to do; especially as the proclamation of an unfavorable judgment at such a time would be particularly painful to mourning friends, already overwhelmed with grief. And hence, as a matter of fact, the Episcopal burial service is used without any regard to the rubric which accompanies it, and is often read over those who have led a notoriously godless life.

In the Episcopal "Order for the burial of the dead," the lesson is from 1 Cor. xv. 20-58, a passage which concerns, not the resurrection of the wicked, or even the general resurrection, but distinctively the resurrection of the righteous dead; those who, having died in the first Adam, have been made alive in the second; those who "are fallen asleep in Christ;" those who "are Christ's at his coming." "While the earth is cast upon the body," the minister is directed to say, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of this world the soul of our deceased brother, we therefore commit his body to the ground: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; at whose second coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in him shall be changed, and made like unto his own glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." And afterwards follows the prayer, "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden

of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; we give thee hearty thanks for the good example of all those thy servants, who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors. And we beseech thee, that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

The use of such a service as this—appropriate and scriptural as it is for the burial of the Christian—at the grave of a notoriously profane and godless person: is it anything else than "associating the hopes of the gospel with the close of an obviously Christless life"? An examination of the burial service of the Reformed (Dutch), the Huguenot, the Lutheran, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, will satisfy the reader that in this particular they are as objectionable as that of the Protestant Episcopal Church quoted above.

The question may be asked, Can this difficulty be avoided by leaving the whole service to the discretion of the minister conducting it? To this I answer, Yes, if he be a discreet educated man, as the ministers of the Presbyterian Church are presumed to be. In a ministry extending over more than forty years, during which I have been called upon to conduct the funeral services of persons of all classes and characters, I can say that I have never found any serious difficulty in so ordering the service as not to compromise God's truth on the one hand, and not to seem to sit in judgment upon the character of the deceased or wound the feelings of mourning friends on the other. And in many of these cases, I see not how I could possibly have done this, had our Directory of Worship contained a burial service similar to any of those referred to above. If, however, any one thinks that a suitable burial service can be prepared which shall not be open to the objections stated, the whole Directory is now before the Church for criticism and amendment, and it is altogether in order for him to prepare and offer such a service.

In the "Larger Catechism," to the question, "To whom is baptism to be administered?" the answer is, "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church, and so

strangers to the covenant of promise, till *they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him*: but infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized." A Form for the baptism of adults must therefore necessarily embody a form for professing faith in Christ, or, in other words, a creed. On this point all Christian Churches agree. On the further question, How extensive and particular should this creed be? there is not the same agreement. Presbyterians, on the authority of our Lord's own special instructions, hold the visible Church to be "the school of Christ," into which pupils are to be received by "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," there to be "taught to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded" (Matt. xxviii. 10, 20). The very fact that they are received into the Church to be taught, necessarily implies their present ignorance of, and consequent inability intelligently to profess, much of God's truth. In the language of Scripture, they are "babes in Christ, to be fed with milk and not with meat" (1 Cor. iii. 1, 2). To require a person at baptism to adopt our whole "Confession of Faith," or even the "Shorter Catechism," would be irreconcilably at variance with the character of the ordinance, viewed as the initiatory rite of the Church. The creed professed must be much more limited than either of these. According to the Larger Catechism, their profession is "of faith in Christ and obedience to him." They must be ready to profess their faith in all that is fairly included in Paul's expression, "Christ and him crucified;" all that is fairly included in the expression of our Confession used in defining the visible Church, "the true religion;" and as by their baptism they become members of a particular church, in which Christ has set men to rule, and in which Christians are associated for a common work and mutual edification, they must be ready to promise "subjection in the Lord to the constituted authorities of the Church: to walk in brotherly love with its members, to study its peace, and to pray and to labor for its prosperity;" but further than this they cannot be required to go, at baptism.

Such a creed as thus indicated, a creed covering the fundamental truths of our holy religion, all that must be believed in order to salvation, we have in what is popularly known as the Apostles' Creed. This Creed is historical rather than doctrinal in its form of statement; and in this it resembles the inspired Gospels rather than our treatises on theology, and on this account it is the more readily and thoroughly comprehended by "babes in Christ." The Presbyterian Church has recognised this as the best known summary of "the true religion" by incorporating it in her Confession of Faith; and there is, therefore, a special propriety in adopting it as the creed to be used in a "Form for the baptism of adults," as the revised Directory does.

In giving this creed, the reader will notice that the clause, "he descended into hell," has been omitted. This has been done on the ground that this clause does not properly belong to the Creed. As is now universally conceded, the Apostle's Creed, as it is popularly called, is not the work of the apostles, as the Church of Rome teaches, but is a symbol of gradual growth, its oldest known form being that given by Irenaeus, A. D. 200. During the whole ante-Nicene or strictly primitive period of the Church's history, the clause, "he descended into hell," had no place in the Creed. As Dr. Schaff, in his "Creeds of Christendom," has shown, it is in the writings of Rufinus, A. D. 300, that it first appears; and it was not until A. D. 650 that any Church Council recognised it as belonging to the Creed.

It is true that the Westminster Assembly recognise it as a part of the Creed, not only in printing it as such, but in their explanation of it in Ans. 59, Larger Catechism: "Christ's humiliation after death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day, which has been otherwise expressed in the words, 'he descended into hell.'"

On this we remark: (1) At the time the Westminster Assembly sat, this subject had not received the thorough investigation it has since; and seeking to correct the text of the Creed, by the aid of the means modern scholarship has at command, no more implies a reflection on the honesty and intelligence of that

Assembly, than seeking to correct the text of the Scriptures, to which that Assembly constantly appealed in support of their statements of doctrines, does ; and (2) that the sense that that Assembly puts upon the clause in question, whilst it is a sense in which it expresses a truth—the very truth expressed in the words which immediately precede it, “dead and buried”—is not the true historic sense of the clause ; it is not the sense in which the Council understood it at the time it was formally incorporated in the Creed. Had it been so understood, it could never have become the germ from which the Romish doctrine of purgatory has developed. For these reasons, the Committee, following the example of the Reformed Episcopal Church, and Dr. A. A. Hodge in his “Book of Forms,” in introducing the Creed in the “Form for the Baptism of Adults” in the Revised Directory, have omitted the clause altogether. Should this course be sanctioned by the Presbyteries, of course a corresponding change must be made in the form of the Creed as published in our Confession of Faith, and the Committee stand ready to take the proper steps to secure such a change in a constitutional way.

Art. VI. of Chap. III. of the Revised Directory is: “In the case of such as have been baptized in infancy, and having reached years of discretion, after making a credible profession of saving faith in Christ, have been received into full communion by the Session, it is proper that they, as well as adult persons received by baptism, should make a profession of their faith in the presence of the congregation. This public profession on the part of those baptized in infancy may be made in the same words with that made by adults at their baptism.” In the early days of the Presbyterian Church in this country, the common practice was, after a person baptized in infancy had been examined as to his personal faith in Christ, and received into the communion of the church by the Session, simply to announce the fact from the pulpit before the administration of the Lord’s Supper in which he was for the first time to participate. Gradually a change in this particular has taken place in the practice of the Church, and this without any authorisation or even formal notice on the part of the higher judicatories of the Church. At the present day, a

public profession of faith by those who have been baptized in infancy, when they are admitted to full communion, is almost universally required in our Church, both North and South.

This seeming novelty is not in reality a novelty, but a return to the practice of the primitive Church, if Calvin's view of the matter is correct, and we think it is. His words are :

"It was an ancient custom in the Church for the children of Christians, after they were come to years of discretion, to be presented to the bishop" (a Presbyterian bishop, as he elsewhere explains), "in order to fulfil that duty which was required of adults who offered themselves for baptism. For such persons were placed among the catechumens, till being duly instructed in the mysteries of Christianity, they were enabled to make a confession of their faith before the bishop and all the people. Therefore, those who had been baptized in their infancy, because they had not then made such a confession of faith before the church, at the close of childhood or commencement of adolescence, were again presented by their parents, and were examined by the bishop, according to the form of the catechism which was then in common use. That this exercise, which deserves to be regarded as sacred and solemn, might have the greater dignity and reverence, they also practised the imposition of hands. . . . Such imposition of hands as is simply connected with benediction, I highly approve, and wish it were now restored to its primitive use, uncorrupted by superstition. . . . I sincerely wish that we retained the custom, which I have stated was practised among the ancients before this abortive image of a sacrament made its appearance. For it was not such a confirmation as the Romanists pretend, which cannot be mentioned without injury to baptism ; but a catechetical exercise, in which children or youth used to deliver an account of their faith in the presence of the Church."—*Calvin's Institutes*, Book IV., Chap. XIX.

As already stated, the custom of requiring a public profession of faith on the part of those baptized in infancy, when they are admitted to full communion, has grown up in the Presbyterian Church in this country without any formal authorisation by any of the higher judicatories of the Church. Indirectly, it has been recognised by Presbyteries sending up overtures to the General Assembly, asking it to provide a prescribed form of confession to be used on such occasions. And this action of Presbyteries has sprung out of the fact that in some of our churches a profession is required covering points of doctrine and particulars in practice which are altogether improper in the case of mere

“babes in Christ;” and so terms of communion have been prescribed which Christ has not authorised. In such circumstances the Church should do one of two things—either prohibit such public professions altogether, or else clearly define the nature and extent of the profession. Believing that our Church would not consent to the first alternative, because, in the judgment of most of our people, as is evident from their practice, such profession is both eminently proper in itself, and because such would seem to have been the practice of the primitive Church, the Committee have provided, in the Revised Directory, a “form” of profession to be used on such occasions. In churches where this public profession is required, it very frequently occurs that adult persons admitted to baptism, and baptized members of the church admitted to full communion, make their public profession of faith at the same time; and where this is the case, they make that profession in the same terms. As both classes alike are then and there admitted to communion, and their examination by the Session covers the same ground, there would seem to be a propriety in having their profession made in the same terms; and this the Revised Directory provides for.

There are two methods which may be pursued in preparing such “forms” as those embraced in the Revised Directory. One is to give the form in full, embracing all that can properly belong to it, and then mark such portions as may be omitted, when it is desirable, for any reason, that the service should be shortened. This method is adopted, to a limited extent, in the Liturgy of the Reformed (Dutch) Church. The other is, to embrace in the form only that which is essential to it, leaving all else to be supplied by the officiating minister. After careful consideration, the latter method was adopted by the Committee of Revision. As an example of what is meant, take “the form for the baptism of infants.” It is customary, and every way appropriate, where circumstances permit, to introduce the service with a brief scriptural argument for infant baptism, and exposition of the nature of the ordinance. Yet this is not necessarily a part of the service, and in certain circumstances is universally and very properly dispensed with. In the “form” given in the Revised Di-

rectory, all such introductory matter has been omitted, it being left to the discretion of the officiating minister to introduce it when and at such length as he may judge best. With a thoroughly educated ministry, such as that of the Presbyterian Church of our day, the course adopted by the Committee seemed best, since in this way all necessary assistance is afforded to such as desire assistance, and yet the liberty of the minister conducting the service is left unimpaired.

Such are the more important particulars in which the Revised Directory differs from the old. It is now before the Presbyteries for criticism. That it may be subjected to a thorough criticism, and improved thereby, is the expectation and desire of the writer of this article.

GEO. D. ARMSTRONG.

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ARTICLE VI.

THE MINISTER OF EVANGELISATION.

The Scriptures teach us that a fully organised congregation has, besides private members, a preacher, rulers, and deacons. Sometimes these three are comprehended under the terms "bishops and deacons." Phil. i. 1. All these are ministers. The deacon is a minister (servant) of the "distribution"—"daily ministrations;" the elder is a minister of rule—government and discipline; the preacher is a minister of the word—"labor in word and doctrine"—popularly styled minister of the gospel. (Acts iv. 35: vi. 1, 4; viii. 4, 5; 1 Tim. v. 17; Luke i. 2; Rom. xv. 16; 2 Cor. iii. 6.) Yet the Church is charged with the duty, "Preach the gospel to every creature." Her very organic law, therefore, exhibits her as Christ's missionary institute: every member of the Church is a member of Christ's missionary society. How, then, is this society to meet this obligation, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature?" Shall the deacons do it? They are not *preachers*; they must attend to the