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ARTICLE I.

THE DIACONATE.*

The Committee appointed last year to report to the Synod, at its present meeting, on the subject of the Diaconate, respectfully present the following paper:

The Committee in taking up the subject referred to them have acted under the impression that the purpose of their appointment was not that they should attempt an exhaustive treatment of it, but should consider it in certain aspects in which either principles underlying the diaconal office may be developed, or theoretical differences be discussed, or the points indicated in which our practice is defective. Accordingly, we propose, after a brief statement of certain assumptions in reference to which there is universal agreement among us, to submit the results of our reflections under the following heads: first, The Relations of the Diaconate to the Presbyterate; secondly, The Scope of the Deacon's Functions; and thirdly, The Sphere of his Operations.

*This paper was presented as a report to the Synod at its recent sessions at Spartanburg, and appears in the REVIEW in accordance with a request of that body. It will be observed that the report was a partial one, discussing only the first head of the general scheme of topics which it proposes to cover. The Committee were directed to submit the remainder at the next sessions of the Synod.

In the first place, it is assumed that the office of the deacon was instituted by Christ, the King and Head of the Church, and therefore exists of divine right. This requires no discussion, since it is obvious that our standards, following the Scriptures, enounce the principle that an office which lacks a divine warrant is a mere human device, and should be excluded from the house of the Lord.

In the second place, it is assumed that the office of deacon is perpetual in the Church. "The ordinary and perpetual officers in the Church," says the Form of Government, "are bishops or pastors; the representatives of the people, usually styled ruling elders; and deacons." It is hardly necessary to state the distinction between the perpetuity of an office and its perpetual occupation by an officer. He may cease to be an officer by either deposition, or demission, or elevation to higher office, or removal by death, or transfer of membership. The officer may change, but the office remains permanent.

In the third place, it is assumed that the deacon is not a preacher. The designation of the end upon which his office terminates makes this clear. "The Scriptures," says the Form of Government, "clearly point out deacons as distinct officers in the Church, whose business it is to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use. To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the Church." The doctrine and practice of our Church are so firmly settled upon this point as to make it unnecessary that it should here be considered.

In the fourth place, the qualifications for the deacon's office are so distinctly specified in the Scriptures, that no difference of opinion can exist among us in regard to them. They are, therefore, taken for granted, with the simple remark, that they are partly spiritual and partly natural; but as the office takes its denomination from its end, and not from its qualifications, that of the deacon is said to be temporal in contradistinction from the others the ends of which are spiritual.

In the fifth place, we assume that the election of deacons is by the people. This has not been the practice of all the Reformed

Churches, but it is the law and practice of ours; and besides is settled by the precedent recorded in the sixth chapter of the Acts.

In the sixth place, we assume that the deacon ought to be ordained by the congregational presbytery, with prayer and the imposition of hands. This is not required by our present Constitution, but it may obviously be deduced from the scriptural account of the ordination of deacons; and the provision touching the matter in the Revised Book, sent down to the Presbyteries by the General Assembly, so clearly reflects the opinion of our Church, that discussion is now deemed unnecessary. Having premised these assumptions, we proceed to take up those aspects of the subject which particularly challenge our attention.

I. First, we will consider the Relations of the Diaconate to the Presbyterate. Under this head, we propose to speak, 1. Of the points of similarity and difference between the office of deacon and the other officers of the Church; 2. Of the theory that the higher office includes the lower; and 3. Of the relations of the deacon to the eldership in the practical working of our system.

FIRST. All the offices of the Church are reducible to their highest generic unity by the property of ministry. They are all ministers of Christ for the advancement of his glory, and ministers of the Church for the promotion of her welfare. Jesus himself said that he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and Paul declared that the Apostles preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and themselves the servants of the Church for Jesus' sake. What was true of the Apostles must be true of all lesser officers; and accordingly Peter exhorts presbyters to refrain from esteeming themselves lords over God's heritage. The appellation *deacon* is sufficient to show that the officer who bears that name is emphatically a servant of the Church. Accepting the usual distribution of functions as designating the chief end to which each kind of officers is to be devoted, we say that the preacher ministers by the word and doctrine, that the presbyter ministers by rule, and that the deacon ministers by distribution. Ministry, then, is the highest genus under which the offices of the Church may be collected. The whole essence

of the property of service enters into all the specific functions which church-officers are called to discharge. In this regard they are all alike.

But in order to ascertain the relations which the respective offices sustain to each other, it is necessary to point out the elements of difference between them, as well as that of similarity. We must go on to discover the proximate genus and the specific difference, in order to ascertain the peculiar properties and the limitations of the several offices. Now the ministry of the church divides itself into orders which furnish a lower generic unity. These orders are not three—the preacher, the presbyter, and the deacon, but two—the presbyter and the deacon. The order of the presbyterate is a proximate genus distributable into two species, which are distinguished from each other precisely by the possession or the non-possession of the property of preaching. One class of presbyters preach, and the other class of presbyters do not preach. The property of ruling is common, that of preaching peculiar and distinctive. The preacher and the ruling elder are not different as to order—they are generically the same officer. They differ only as to the performance or non-performance of a special function. We are not called upon here to vindicate this distribution, but content ourselves with the remark that the more closely it is examined the more distinctly will it be seen to be in accordance with the teachings of the Presbyterian Reformers. The doctrine of Calvin upon this point is very definitely expressed. We cite attention to his language in his comments upon the twenty-eighth verse of the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians. He says that Paul indicates a twofold order of presbyters—*duplicem ordinem presbyterorum*. He does not say two orders—*duæ ordines*, but a twofold order—*duplex ordo*; that is, clearly, one order with two distinct properties.

Now the deacon is not simply distinguished from the other officers by the possession of a specific property. He is generically different from them. He does not belong to the order of presbyters, with a specific function which peculiarly marks his office; he belongs to a different order, which has been generally designated by the title of distributors. He is not a presbyter who

distributes, as the preacher is a presbyter who preaches. He falls under an entirely different proximate genus; so that the difference between him and the other officers of the Church is generic and not merely specific, or, to speak perhaps with greater strictness, he is both generically and specifically different from them. In the case of the deacon the genus and the species are one and the same—the order and the function coincide. There is no division of the order diaconate into species, as in the case of the presbyterate. Let it be carefully observed, then, that the presbyterate and the diaconate are two distinct and separate orders, not indeed coördinate as to authority, but concurrent as to ministry. Whatever be the relations subsisting between them, it is evidently not that of generic identity. This is clear from the consideration of the object-matter about which each order of officers is concerned, and the ends which it contemplates. The one terminates mainly on persons, the other on ecclesiastical goods; the one is appointed for government, the other for distribution; the one is chiefly occupied with the care of souls, the other with the care of bodies.

SECONDLY. But here we are brought face to face with the next question which we proposed to discuss: Does the higher office include the lower? Does the presbyterate contain the diaconate? It is one which lies directly in the track of our exposition of the relation between the two orders, and which cannot therefore be logically evaded. What, then, is the doctrine concerning the inclusion of the lower office in the higher, as stated by those who have held it?

1. Sometimes it is thus expressed, as in the first revision of our Form of Government which was approved at Memphis, 1866, by the General Assembly: "He that is called to teach is called also to rule, and he that is called to rule is called also to distribute." If this language is to be strictly construed, it means that the obligation to distribute is as much bound upon the presbyter by a divine call as is that to rule upon the preacher.

2. Sometimes it is said to be a *virtual* inclusion of the lower office in the higher. This, for example, was the view expressed by the London ministers who were authors of the Divine Right of

Church Government. Their language is: "All the inferior offices are virtually comprehended in the superior, and may be discharged by them; elders may distribute as well as deacons, and beyond them, rule: pastors may distribute and rule as well as deacons and elders, and beyond both, preach, dispense sacraments, and ordain ministers: Apostles may do them all, and many things besides, extraordinary." Here the doctrine seems to be that the higher officers have the power possessed by the lower, so that in the absence of the lower they may actually discharge their functions. but in a regular condition of the church do not exercise that power.

3. But at other times, the ground is taken that there is an *actual* inclusion of the lower in the higher; so that the higher officers are not only empowered to perform the acts of the lower in an irregular and extraordinary state of the church, but in its regular condition may ordinarily discharge the functions of the lower. Thus, for instance, elders may cooperate with deacons in the joint administration of the business which properly belongs to the diaconal office. This is the view set forth in the Catechism of the Principles and Constitution of the Free Church of Scotland. To the question: "Does it not belong to the deacons alone to administer the secular affairs of the church?" the answer is: "The greater office always includes the less; the presbyter may, therefore, as a deacon, take part, when it is necessary, in conducting the 'outward business of the house of God.'" This is the theory in which the practice of holding what is known as the deacons' court is founded. The elders and deacons sit and vote together in relation to business which is properly diaconal. Such are the forms in which the doctrine is enounced, and it must be admitted that they are not coincident with each other; it becomes necessary, therefore, to settle the state of the question which we are discussing.

First, then, the question is not, whether the higher officers, when they are the only existing officers, may discharge the functions of the lower who are wanting. In that case, it is conceded that they not only may, but ought to, discharge those functions. Where no deacons can be obtained, the elders ought to perform

diaconal duties. But that, we conceive, is a different thing from saying that the elder is a deacon.

Secondly, the question is not, whether the ruling office includes the non-ruling and merely distributive, as an object upon which government terminates. In regard to that, there can be no dispute. The governmental administration of the affairs of the Church, as well temporal as spiritual, is lodged in the presbyterate. But in this sense, all ecclesiastical persons are included under the presbyterial office. The preacher who is the highest officer as well as the deacon who is the lowest are alike included under the jurisdiction of presbyterate.

Thirdly, the question *is*, whether in a regular condition of the church, in which its complement of offices is filled and in orderly operation, the higher office so includes the lower as to make it legitimate for the higher officer to discharge the functions of the lower. To state the question still more precisely, in relation to the matter immediately in hand, it is whether the presbyter is also a deacon, and whether, in a regular state of the church, he may therefore legitimately perform diaconal functions. And the question is, further, whether there may be a joint management by vote, or a joint execution, by presbyters and deacons, of business belonging to the deacon's office. This, then, is the precise question before us, and in undertaking to refute the doctrine that the higher office so includes the lower, we shall first consider the arguments in support of the affirmative, and then present those which occur to us in favor of the negative.

1. The first argument which we encounter is derived from alleged apostolic teaching and practice: the Apostle, the higher officer, included the presbyter and the deacon, the lower officers; therefore, reasoning from analogy—for there is no scriptural statement of the fact—the preacher, the higher officer, includes the presbyter and the deacon, the lower; and the presbyter, the higher, includes the deacon, the lower officer. There are here two questions: Do the Scriptures teach that the apostolic office included that of elder and deacon? and, if they do, is the analogical inference legitimate, that the preacher includes the elder and deacon, and the elder the deacon? In proof of the fact that

the Apostle included the elder, two passages are relied upon—1 Peter v. 1, in which the Apostle says: “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder”; and 2 John 1, in which the Apostle John styles himself an elder: “The elder unto the elect lady.” We submit that these passages are of too doubtful meaning to ground the doctrine of the inclusion of the lower office in the higher.

(1.) In the first place, they do not necessarily teach an inclusion of the lower in the higher office, but, for aught that appears to the contrary, only a divinely-ordained coëxistence of the two offices; and this view would seem to be supported by the fact that when the Apostles acted as Apostles, they did not act as elders, and, on the other hand, when they officiated as elders, they did not as Apostles. When they organised a church by the appointment and ordination of elders, they acted simply as Apostles; but the eldership having been constituted, whenever they sat with it in the exercise of joint rule, they acted not as Apostles but as elders. Thus, in the Synod of Jerusalem, they participated as presbyters with the body of the presbyters as, *quoad hoc*, their coördinates and peers in rule. The Apostle did not express himself as apostle mediately through the elder, but the Apostle who was at the same time also an elder expressed himself as elder. We see no reason to conclude that one office was included in the other, but merely that there was the concurrence of the generically distinct apostolic and presbyterial offices in the same person. At least the hypothesis of coexistence has as fair a support in the passages cited as that of inclusion; and as these are the only proof-texts adduced in behalf of the latter, we repeat it that they are too doubtful to furnish it an adequate ground.

(2.) In the second place, if it should be said that the Apostles were not only extraordinary teachers, but also extraordinary presbyters, and that as such they included the ordinary presbyters of the Church, we refer again to the fact that when they sat with the ordinary presbyters they did not sit as a superior order, with higher authority and rank than the other elders, but as coincident with them in order. They did not sit as prelates, but as the fellow-presbyters of their brethren.

(3.) But, in the third place, even if it could be proved from Scripture that the Apostle included the elder, the inference by analogy from that admission to the position that among the ordinary officers of the Church, the higher officer includes the lower would appear to be illegitimate. For, *first*, reasoning by analogy from the case of extraordinary and temporary officers to that of ordinary and perpetual, is, to say the least, too doubtful to ground a theory which takes on the aspect of a regulative dogma. *Secondly*, if the apostolic office as the higher included the presbyterial as the lower, this inclusion must be conceived either under the notion of the product of a genetic process of evolution, or of a result of logical classification. Let us suppose the former—that the elder's office was evolved, produced, out of the apostle's. Now pursuing the path of this analogical reasoning, it would follow that the elder's office as lower is evolved out of the preacher's as higher. But what is the fact? Every ordinary officer is, so to speak, produced, in the development of the steps looking to his induction into office, at the last, by ordination. No ordination, no officer. Now, in the ordinary and regular condition of the church, who ordains? The higher or the lower officer? The answer is, that it is not the preacher, the higher officer, who ordains the elder, the lower officer, but precisely the contrary—the elders ordain the preacher. The preacher is genetically evolved from the presbytery. But to press the analogy under consideration would be to establish the doctrine that the preacher ought to ordain the elder. The analogy therefore is deceitful. But if it be said that we conceive of the inclusion as the result of a logical reduction, then it must be held in the sense that the lower office is included under the higher as the species is included under the genus. If this be so, then as the whole essence of the genus is contained in the species and something more that is a peculiar property, the whole essence of the apostolate descends into the elder, and he is an apostle with an additional and distinctive function. That of course no one would hold. Further, the inference is drawn from the case of the apostle to that of the preacher. He includes the elder because he is the higher officer. But the genus, we have seen, is the presbyterate, and the preacher is a
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species; so that, logically speaking, the preacher is included in the elder and not the elder in the preacher. A species may be greater than the genus—man is greater than animal; so the preacher is greater than the elder, but, nevertheless, the genus includes the species, not the species the genus. Animal includes man, not the contrary. So, logically, the genus presbyterate includes the species preacher. The whole essence of the genus, presbyter, is in the preacher, and he is something more; but the contrary doctrine would lead to the position that the elder has the whole essence of the preacher as the generic officer, and something more that is distinctive, viz., the ruling function. Neither, therefore, upon one supposition or the other can the inference be drawn from the apostolic office that in the ordinary condition of the Church the higher office includes the lower. It would seem indeed that the lower and generic office, presbyter, includes the higher and specific office, preacher, and that all we can determine is, that in the defect of the lower officer, the higher officer may discharge his functions. There is no need to formulate a theory as to the inclusion of one office in another, but simply to hold that one officer may be called upon occasionally to perform the acts habitually pertaining to the other.

The truth would appear to be that it is useless to inquire whether the preacher includes the elder, or the elder the preacher, for the simple reason that the preacher is an elder, and therefore not only may perform, but is bound to perform, the duties of an elder. So far as he is an elder, there is no difference between him and the ruling elder. He does not include him; he *is* the ruling elder. There are other persons besides him who are also ruling elders though not preachers; but as to the office of rule, he and they are one. There is no dispute upon the question whether the person who preaches may also rule. Of course he may and ought, for the reason that he is an ordained ruler: but it cannot be proved that as preacher he ever performs the function of rule. He includes rule in his office, but not in his office as preacher. The distinction is patent.

The special question before us, however, is, whether the office of presbyter includes that of deacon; and we proceed to consider

the proof alleged from Scripture to show that the apostolic office included the diaconate, and the inference by analogy that the presbyter's office includes the deacon's. It is inferred from the narrative in the sixth chapter of Acts, that, previously to the election of the seven deacons mentioned, the Apostles themselves had distributed the alms of the Church to her poor members. It is certain that contributions were laid at the Apostles' feet, but there is no clear evidence that they discharged the distributive function. It is worthy of notice that the names of the seven appear to indicate that they were Hellenists, and it has been argued that, as it is not likely that there were no Hebrew distributors, such had previously existed as transferred from the synagogue upon their profession of the Christian faith. We venture no decisive judgment upon this point; but in the absence of anything more certain than a bare probability that the Apostles had acted as deacons—a probability somewhat countervailed, at least, by the considerations which have been mentioned—it must strike a candid mind as rash to found upon it a theory regulative of ecclesiastical practice. The words, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables," may mean that the Apostles had not done so unreasonable a thing; they may mean, on the other hand, that, inasmuch as the opportunity existed for the appointment of others to attend to the poor, the Apostles availed themselves of it to relieve themselves of an unreasonable impediment to the full exercise of their proper ministry. Both suppositions have been advocated. The case is too doubtful to afford definite ground for a doctrine.

The other passages alleged are those in which the Apostles are represented as having acted as receivers and transmitters of alms contributed by the Gentile churches for the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem. That, however, would not prove that they were deacons, or that they acted in the capacity of deacons. We send contributions by other hands than those of deacons to Baltimore, and to our brethren now suffering from the ravages of the pestilence. The Assembly's Executive Committees do not employ deacons to transmit money to distant missionary stations. If a minister going to one of those missionary points were made the

bearer of supplies, how would that prove him to be discharging the functions of a deacon any more than a trustworthy merchant charged with the same responsibility? No doubt the Apostles in their instructions, by letter or orally, urged the duty upon the Gentile churches of contributing to the wants of their needy brethren in Judæa, but in doing so they were performing a function proper to their own distinctive office as preachers, a function which every pastor now feels himself obligated to discharge in similar circumstances. Here again the scriptural evidence that the Apostles acted as deacons is too slender to afford a foundation for the generalised statement that the higher office includes the lower. And putting both these sources of proof from Scripture together, we cannot fail to observe that the induction is very incomplete which leads to so wide a generalisation, the data too meagre to ground so controlling a theory.

But even if it were admitted that the Apostles did under certain circumstances discharge the duties of deacons, that would by no means legitimate the inference that in a formed and regular condition of the Church preachers and elders may perform diaconal functions. The record in Acts would prove precisely the opposite. For, whatever were the facts before the election and appointment of the seven, after that took place it is certain that the Apostles did not act as deacons. They expressly affirmed that it would have been unreasonable for them to do so. Deacons being in existence, the performance of their duties by ministers of the word was pronounced to be incompatible with the due discharge of their proper functions. Should it be urged that such a consequence resulted simply from the want of time on the part of the Apostles to attend to the duties of the diaconate, and would not hold where there is time for such duties on the part of the higher officers of the Church, the answer is, that the supposition is purely gratuitous. There is no time, there never can be any time, from the very nature and pressure of his own official trusts, for any officer to leave his proper functions for the purpose of performing those of another, when that other may compass their discharge. This is certainly true of the minister of the word, and, we submit, must also be true of ruling elders, who, in addition to their

secular avocations, have the burden of government and episcopal oversight resting upon them. They have a plenty to do, if they attend to their peculiar duties. So much for the proof from apostolic teaching and practice.

2. The next argument in favor of the theory that the higher office includes the lower is derived from the doctrine and practice of the Reformed Churches.

(1.) It cannot be questioned that the standards and the practice of the Scotch Churches may be pleaded in support of the theory. The deacons' court of the Free Church is a well known instance of their practice, and the First and Second Books of Discipline, the Collections of Steuart of Pardovan, and the Catechism of the Free Church, definitely announce the doctrine. The virtual inclusion of the lower in the higher office is asserted in the "Divine Right of Church Government," written by certain London ministers. Our information may be at fault, and if so we will be glad to be corrected, but we have been unable to discover that there has been a common consent of the Reformed Churches touching this matter. We have not encountered any statement of the doctrine in their Confessions, and we have failed to find it in Calvin, or Turretin, or Voetius, whose great work on ecclesiastical polity is very full and minute, or in DeMoor, whose distinctions are particular, or even in George Gillespie; while Dr. David King, a Scotchman, in his able work on Presbyterian Church Government, expresses grave distrust of the tendencies of the practice upon this point of the Free Church. We have not found it in the Discipline of the French Churches; but Canon I., Chapter IV. is in these significant words: "Moneys belonging unto the poor shall not be dispensed by any other hands than those of the deacons, by and with the advice and consent of the Consistory." It is deserving of attention that in the French, Belgic, and Dutch Churches, exactly the opposite theory was, under certain circumstances, put into practice—that the deacon might discharge the functions of the presbyter. He shared the spiritual government of the church with the elders. Says Canon II., Chapter V., of the French Discipline: "Whereas our churches, by reason of the present distress, have hitherto most

happily employed deacons in their government, and that they have discharged at the same time the elder's office; such as for the future shall be so elected or continued, shall have with the pastors and elders the government of the church, and therefore shall commonly appear with them at the Consistory, and at Colloquies, and Synods, provided they be sent by their Consistory.' Here the office of the deacon was made inclusive of that of elder, the very reverse of the Scotch doctrine. These references are sufficient to show that there has not been common consent on the part of the Reformed Churches in regard to the matter under consideration. On the other hand, there have been wide differences among them, and the conclusion obviously is, that our Church must settle her doctrine and practice concerning it in accordance with her views of the teachings of Scripture, and of the analogy of Presbyterian church government.

(2.) But if it may be proved that the *consensus* of the Reformed Churches upon this point was more general than we have ascertained it to be, the argument derived from it would only have the force of a presumption—a venerable presumption, it is true, but still only a presumption. What is the force of that presumption? The answer to that question must depend upon the answer we give to another which precedes it—what is the true Church? That question must first be settled at the bar of conscience. But those who have settled it, must believe that the Church which they hold to be true is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in its interpretations of the Word. And consequently to them the probability is a powerful one that doctrines sustained by the common consent of that Church for ages are true. Authority, numbers, and antiquity, may be and are pleaded in behalf of error; and therefore the celebrated maxim of Vincent, *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, must be determined in its application by the sort of body in connexion with which it is pleaded. To us, what has been held always, everywhere, and by all, in the Reformed Church, comes commended by a presumptive value which no independence of judgment can despise. All this we cheerfully concede, but yet Protestants have always held that even the true Church, as visible, is fallible; and therefore its

common consent cannot be erected into an infallible standard of judgment. There is but one such standard—the supreme and perfect rule of faith and practice in the inspired Word of God. A true Church may depart from this standard; hence the possibility of a corrupt Church. Corruption presupposes purity; no corrupt church begins as corrupt. Like the human race in innocence, it starts right. It is therefore evermore necessary to compare the special doctrines and practices of even that Church which we believe to be in the main pure and uncorrupt with the infallible and unchanging standard of the divine Word. Sleepless vigilance is the price of purity. We can never be discharged from the law that evidence is the measure of assent to the intelligence of the adult, and that in matters spiritual and supernatural in the sphere of doctrine, government, and worship, that evidence is to be ultimately found in the Scriptures, and to be ultimately weighed by the individual judgment. Now, were it true that the particular principle under examination is sustained by the general consent of the Reformed Church, it could not be reflectively appropriated by us as an established one without testing it for ourselves by the supreme standard. Much more does it require investigation, if, as we have seen, there is proof of its being sustained only by a partial consent of the Church. We proceed, therefore, to indicate the considerations which lead us to question, if not reject, its validity, especially in its applicability to the relation between the office of presbyter and that of deacon.

We have seen that there is a defect of scriptural proof of the doctrine we are examining, that the passages relied on for its support are of too doubtful a character to ground it; the arguments in opposition to it will be in the shape of inferences—legitimate inferences we conceive—from the teachings of Scripture and from the principles of our standards which express them.

1. The first is derived from the admitted fact, which has already been set forth, that the elder and the deacon belong to different orders. They are generically different, and not merely specifically, as are the preacher and the ruling elder. Now, according to the first principle of classification, the essence which

is contained in the genus, as a whole of extension, must also be contained in the species, as a whole of intension. But the essence of the genus-presbyter is the property of rule, and it follows that if the deacon is included under the presbyter as generic, the property of rule descends to the deacon. It is evident, however, that the property of rule cannot be predicated of the deacon. He is not generically a ruler with the superadded property of distribution which specifically marks him. He is simply a distributor. This of itself is sufficient to show that he cannot be included in the elder. He belongs to a different order or proximate genus, the very essence of which is distribution and not rule. It cannot be urged in reply that one order may be included under another order, since one genus, as lower, may be included under another genus, as the next higher. For in that case the lower genus, so included, is relatively but a species, and the principle holds that it must contain, besides a specific property, the whole essence of the genus. But no reasoning can show that, in accordance with the Scriptures and our Constitution, the essential attribute of rule is possessed by the deacon. He cannot therefore be reduced under the order of the presbyterate. It may be said that the General Assembly of 1840 decided that an elder may be a deacon. The question was, "May a person at once be deacon and elder?" In answer, the ruling of the Assembly was as follows:

Resolved, That while it is important and desirable that the several offices in the Christian Church should be kept distinct, and be sustained by different individuals whenever a sufficient number of competent men can be found; yet, in the judgment of this Assembly, it is not inconsistent with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, nor with the precedent furnished in filling the office of deacon at its first institution, that, where a necessity exists, the same individual should sustain both offices."

Now, it is evident that the Assembly did not deliver the judgment that the office of elder included that of deacon—the language of the ruling implies the opposite—but that the person who is elder may in extraordinary circumstances and under the stress of necessity, discharge the office of deacon. All that can be collected from the decision is, that it affirmed the possible coëxistence

of the two offices in the same person; not that the one office includes the other. The distinction is one we have already signalised, between a person embracing in himself two functions, and an office including another office. The preacher unites in his person two functions of preaching and ruling, but the function of preaching does not include that of ruling. But whatever may be the construction placed upon this deliverance of a single Assembly, it cannot legitimately contradict the plain principles which we have enounced.

It may also be suggested as a difficulty in this view that it would involve the consequence that a deacon when elevated to the eldership would cease to be a deacon. We admit that elevation to higher office is one of the causes of removal from the office previously held; as when, for example, a State Treasurer is made Senator or Governor, he ceases to be Treasurer; nor could he, in that case, in ordinary circumstances, act as Treasurer. Upon this point we cite the words of Owen, who inconsistently with his apparent approval of the doctrine that the higher officer may ordinarily perform the functions of the lower, but, we think, truly, says: "The difference between a deacon and a presbyter is not in degree, but in order. A deacon made a presbyter is not advanced unto a farther degree in his own order, but leaves it for another." But if he leave the diaconal order, to become a member of the presbyterial order, how can he continue to discharge vacated functions? Is he not *functus officio*, as deacon?

It may further be urged, that to admit the legitimate discharge of diaconal functions by the elder, by reason of necessity arising from extraordinary circumstances, is to give up the question. But that does not follow. It does not follow that because a ruling elder, in such circumstances, performs functions which are ordinarily assigned to the preaching elder, as our constitution provides in the case of churches having no preacher, his office includes that of the preaching elder. It does not follow that because, under similar circumstances, the deacon, as the Reformed Churches conceded, may perform those duties, his office includes that of the preacher or the ruling elder. "Necessity has no law." And to argue from a condition of things in which the

ordinary operation of law is suspended to one in which it exists, is certainly to reason inconclusively. The argument proves too much and is therefore invalid. An elder may, under extraordinary circumstances, do what is ordinarily done by a deacon, and yet the doctrine be true that his office, as such, does not include the office of deacon.

In connexion with this argument from the difference of orders, it may be added, that the doctrine under discussion proceeds upon a delusive analogy. As the preacher's office includes the elder's, so the elder's includes the deacon's. We have already exposed the confusion of the preacher, as person, with the office of preaching. But admitting that the preacher legitimately discharges the functions of ruling elder, the reason is plain: he is a ruling elder, and therefore ought to perform his own duties. He is ordained a ruler as well as preacher, as his ordination vows imply. But the ruling elder is not ordained as deacon, and accordingly he undertakes no engagements, makes no vow, at his ordination to perform the duties of deacon. The reason is, that he belongs to a different *ordo* from the deacon, and therefore has different obligations to meet. It is clear that there is no analogy between the two cases.

2. Our next argument is derived from the import of ordination. No one has a right to perform ecclesiastical functions unless he be ordained to their discharge. If, therefore, the elder may perform diaconal functions, it must be because he is ordained to the office of deacon. But this is contrary to the understanding by the Church of the import of ordination to the eldership, and contrary indeed to the terms of the ordaining act. Surely it does not follow that when one is formally inducted into one order he is formally placed in another. But unless the elder is thus assigned to the diaconal order, we fail to apprehend his right in an orderly state of the church to discharge its functions. But, further, if the ground be taken that the elder is ordained not only as elder, but as deacon, it would follow that as ordination is always to a definite work, and solemnly imposes an obligation to its performance, the elder is, *ex officio*, bound to do the work of a deacon. But that position will be held by none. Nor will it

do to say that there are others to whom that work is peculiarly assigned. If the work goes with the office, the fact that some deacons perform it cannot excuse other deacons from its discharge. They may have other work to do, but this cannot be neglected without a violation of their ordination engagements. They must do their whole work.

3. Our third argument is based upon the incompatibility of the duties of deacon and elder, in a settled condition of the church in which the offices are filled. It is not necessary to advance any other proof of this position than the declaration of the Apostles at the election of the seven deacons: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God to serve tables." Attention to the temporal duties of the deacon is inconsistent with concentration of purpose upon, and devotion of energy to, the spiritual functions which are proper to the elder's office. He ought not to be diverted from his own proper work to do that which pertains to another office, and is of another kind than his. If the mingling of the two sorts of duty is pronounced unreasonable by inspired authority, one would be apt to suppose that a theory which justifies it is itself unreasonable.

4. Our fourth argument is a probable one drawn from the early existence of the office of archdeacon in the post-apostolic Church. We have the authority of Bingham for the statement that Jerome announced the view that the office was elective and that the deacons were the electors. In all probability the board of deacons in the early Church were accustomed to elect their chairman from their own number. This officer, it is altogether likely, came to be, like the moderator of the congregational presbytery, a permanent president. It would seem impossible to account for the existence of such an elective archdeacon as Jerome mentions, in any other way. This would be wholly inexplicable upon the theory that the minister of the word was, *ex officio*, moderator of the board of deacons, or that the elders sat with the deacons in the joint management of diaconal business.

5. Our fifth consideration is derived from a logical and yet impossible consequence flowing from the doctrine. It is presented by Dr. Arnold W. Miller in an able discussion of the

deacon question. If the higher office includes the lower, it follows that "the superior officer must possess all the qualifications required in the inferior." But such a consequence is both unscriptural and unreasonable. If you do not admit the consequence, then the head of the Church has imperfectly provided for its wants. He has called officers to a work for which they are not qualified. But such a view reacts to the destruction of the hypothesis that the greater office includes the less. If you admit the consequence, then it is not justified by the divinely given list of the elder's qualifications, which do not include those of the deacon. One may be qualified to rule and not to distribute; and therefore the offices themselves are distinct. And so the legitimate consequence of the theory being false, the theory itself must be defective.

6. The next objection to this doctrine springs from its legitimate tendency to effect the suppression of the deacon's office. If the higher office includes the lower, the lower to the extent of that inclusion becomes unnecessary. The elder being supposed to be the subject of diaconal power, and the executor of diaconal functions, the conclusion is easy, that the deacon as a distinct officer is superfluous. This is obvious from the law of parcimony which precludes the needless multiplication of causes for an effect—of agencies for an act. But this would be to impeach the wisdom and authority of Christ in appointing the deacon as a separate officer for the performance of peculiar and distinctive functions. The wisdom, nay, the necessity, of such an appointment, is briefly evinced by such considerations as the following. First, other than spiritual officers are able and suited to discharge temporal offices. A separate class of officers for those functions is required by the principle of a division of labor, assigning to it the duties which it is most competent and adapted to perform. Secondly, it is inexpedient, human wisdom being the judge, that they who minister in spiritual things should distribute the alms of the church. That would expose them to the danger of being continually deceived. Such is the weakness of human nature, that the recipients of spiritual instruction should not be liable to the motives arising from the hope of receiving material aid.

And here we refer not to the dispensation of private charity—though even in that case caution is necessary in mingling the two things—but to the regular operation of a system of offices. Thirdly, both functions—the spiritual and the temporal—cannot be adequately performed by the same officer. The practice, consequently, which tends in an ordinary and regular condition of the Church, to sink the deacon's office into the elder's, involves not only a disregard to the kingly authority of Christ, but an impeachment of his wisdom; and we may add, an obstruction to the operation of his mercy in relation to the temporal necessities of his saints. The natural tendency of the doctrine that the higher office includes the lower to render the deacon a supernumerary was manifested during a long period of the history of the Scottish Church. In very many of her congregations the office of deacon, as distinct from that of the elder, was obliterated. Some of her own writers assign this result to the influence of the theory in question, and we think with justice. We see the same tendency exhibiting itself in the American Church, in the exclusion of deacons from all the Executive Committees of the General Assemblies; for although they have diaconal functions to perform, this doctrine justifies their discharge by presbyters alone. But any theory which inherently tends to the suppression, or even the neglect, of an office established by the authority and grounded in the wisdom and mercy of Christ, is convicted by that fact of lodging a sophism in its bosom.

7. The last argument against the doctrine which we submit, is derived from the fact that it legitimates the bodies known as deacons' courts. If they are without warrant for their existence, the theory which justifies them must be regarded as erroneous. The force of this argument depends upon the proof of the illegitimacy of the deacons' court. That proof, therefore, it is incumbent upon us to furnish. What then is the deacons' court? For an answer to that question we must repair to the authorised documents of the Free Church of Scotland, since, so far as we know, that court had its origin in, or at least is indebted for its formal recognition to, that Church. In Appendix No. V. to its Catechism, entitled "Organisation of the Free Church of Scot-

land," we find this provision: "When the kirk-session meets *quoad temporalia*—that is to say, in reference to the secular business of the congregation—the deacons are entitled to be present as members of it, and have an equal voice with the elders in all the proceedings. On such occasions it is called the deacons' court." Here then we have a definition of the deacons' court. With an eye simply to the language of this statement, we would be entitled to infer that on these occasions it is the session, as session, which meets, and that the deacons are admitted to a participation in the sessional deliberations and decisions, because they bear reference to secular business. And then the judgment that such a body is illegitimate would be obvious and indisputable. For it would amalgamate two orders, generically different, into a mongrel unit—would admit those who have no right to rule to joint rule with presbyters who alone are entitled to rule. But we are not disposed to take advantage of mere phraseology. Let it be admitted that the deacons' court of the Free Church is not the same thing, even as to temporalities, with the extraordinary Consistory of the French, Belgic, and Dutch Churches, which mingled deacons with elders in joint rule; but that it meets not as the session, with an incorporation of deacons, but as a board of deacons, the elders not appearing as elders merely, but as elders who are also deacons. This construction is rendered possible by the very name of the body. It takes its denomination from the diaconal element as that which is prominent in its composition. But if it be conceded that this is the nature of the deacons' court as it would be explained by its advocates, it cannot, we conceive, be introduced into the working of the Presbyterian system without involving a departure from principles fundamental in that system. For, in the first place, it implies the sinking of some of the proper and distinctive functions of the eldership into those which are purely diaconal. It cannot be denied that the session, as session, is both empowered and obligated to act in reference to temporal matters, in so far as they stand related to the personal rights and duties of the members of the Church, and are made the subject of deliberation and action with regard to spiritual ends. For example, it is the province of

the session to fix the stipend of the minister of the word, to order collections for benevolent objects, and to determine the amount of money which may be needed for special purposes. Here they deal with temporalities, but temporalities as affecting personal rights and duties and contemplating spiritual ends. These are presbyterial and not diaconal functions, and to say that the elders discharge them as deacons is to say that they abandon the duties of the eldership to perform those of the diaconate, or, more strictly, that they destroy the functions of the eldership and substitute those of the diaconate in their place. This, we contend, is what the deacons' court actually does, and therefore charge it with being a body whose existence has no warrant. But, in the second place, if this be denied, and the ground is taken that in the cases specified the elders act as elders, the alternative is equally damaging. For, that is to admit that the deacons are allowed to share in acts of rule, which, as they terminate upon persons and spiritual ends, are absolutely competent to elders alone. The deacons are supposed, in this respect, to perform the ruling functions of the elders. And besides this consideration, to say that the elders, in the deacons' court, act as elders, is to give up the very theory in which that body is grounded, viz., that when the elders sit in it with the deacons they act as deacons and not as elders.

In addition to these views, it may be remarked, that the implicit tendencies of such an organisation are dangerous. Being a larger and more imposing body than the session, and wielding the whole power of the purse, it tends to overshadow that vitally essential body; and should this tendency be developed, it is not extravagant to augur that a new court would be introduced into the Church unknown to Presbyterianism, which would be paramount to the court of presbyters itself. Indeed, though we would not be captious, this seems to be indicated in the unhappy title affixed to the body. To call a deacon a member of a court is either a solecism, or, if the language means anything, it trains the deacon to regard himself as possessed of the power of jurisdiction, and entitled to express it as a constituent of a judicial tribunal.

If, now, it has been proved that deacons' courts are unpresbyterian institutions, the conclusion is fairly reached that the theory in which they find their justification is convicted of being erroneous. That theory is, that the office of elder includes the office of deacon.

In the prosecution of this argument against deacons' courts, it is not intended to imply that there ought not to be joint-meetings of sessions and boards of deacons. On the contrary, we believe them to be highly expedient. But then the ends sought ought to be conference, mutual information, and the reception of direction and advice by the deacons from the session, and not the decision of questions by a formal joint vote of the two bodies. Such a meeting might be designated elders' and deacons' joint meeting, or elders' and deacons' conference, or something equivalent to those titles.

Having endeavored to refute the doctrine that the office of elder so includes that of deacon, as to make it competent to the elder, in an ordinary and regular condition of the Church, to perform the duties of the deacon, and having attempted to establish the opposite doctrine, we proceed to indicate, without expanding, some of the prominent consequences which would logically flow and might be expected practically to result from the prevalence of the view for which we have contended in the working of our system. It would follow:

1. That in the general, the distinct functions and responsibilities of generically different offices would be disentangled from confusion and kept separate from each other. It is needless to argue at length that this would be a positive practical gain. What is every one's business is apt to be done well by no one.

2. That the session ought not to participate with the board of deacons in the joint formal discharge of proper diaconal functions. The deacons' court, as court, would be precluded.

3. That the minister of the word is not, *ex officio*, moderator of the board of deacons, but that board is entitled to elect their chairman from their own number.

4. That where the proper duties of deacon are to be discharged, the deacon ought to be assigned to their performance and not the

presbyter. This consequence is capable of special applications, some of which we signalise :

(1.) That, as the canon of the French Discipline already mentioned has it, "moneys belonging unto the poor shall not be dispensed by any other hands than those of the deacons, by and with the advice and consent of the session."

(2.) That, in connexion with executive committees of the courts, the deacon ought to have a place for the discharge of functions which are peculiarly and distinctively diaconal. Thus, for example, as the function of treasurer is purely diaconal, it ought to be assigned to a deacon. Where presbyterial functions are to be performed by committees, they ought to be composed of presbyters, as for instance, a committee of missions; but where, in connexion with these duties, those strictly diaconal come in, the deacon ought to come in with them. This would hold in regard to all the courts from the Session to the Assembly. Special temporary committees of finance, whose function expires with the meetings at which they are appointed, would come properly within the province of courts discharging financial business as affecting personal rights, interests, and duties.

(3.) The deacon ought to have a place in the Board of Trustees of the General Assembly, and in every board of directors appointed by a court, and which involves the execution of financial business.

5. That all agencies appointed for the raising of money for particular ends ought, so far as the collection of the money is concerned, to be executed by deacons. Let us illustrate by a special case which may serve as a specimen of the rest. Money is needed for the support of a theological seminary. An agent is appointed to induce the churches to contribute to this purpose. If he be a presbyter, or any non-diaconal person, his function consists in enlightening the Church in respect to the matter, and by instruction and exhortation inciting it to contribute. So was it with the Apostles when charged with an agency to raise money for the relief of the poor saints in Judæa. They stirred up the churches to contribute, but did not actually collect the alms. This is plain from the exhortation of Paul to the Corinthian church to collect

them before the agents came, that there might be no hurried collection after they came. And he boasted to the Macedonians that Achaia was a year ahead of the arrival of the agents in beginning to make collections for the specified end. It is clear that the actual collection was done by the deacons. The Apostle and his co-adjutors received and transmitted the alms simply because it was either impossible, or utterly inexpedient, to send deacons from every church to Jerusalem, as carriers of the supplies. We are satisfied that the employment of deacons for collection in every congregation would be a more penetrating, searching, particular, exhaustive method of raising money, than the personal collection of it by one individual. This, we think, is Christ's plan, and when the Church adopts and pursues it she will find her difficulties clearing away.

In the case of an effort to raise an endowment, while we believe that personal solicitation as well as public appeals may be committed to a single agent, for they are really of a didactic and hortatory nature, it would be better, and safer for the reputation of the agent, that the amounts contributed be placed in the hands of the deacons of the churches, and by them forwarded, either through the agent, or any other approved and trustworthy channel, to the Treasurer of the Board of Directors.

THIRDLY. We proceed to consider the Relations of the Board of Deacons to the Session in the practical working of our system. The duty of the diaconate may be conceived as having a threefold relation: first, to the temporary relief of the poor; secondly, to the temporal support of the benevolent enterprises of the Church; thirdly, to the temporal maintenance of the Church, and the care of all ecclesiastical goods. The third element of this distribution will not here be considered, as it properly falls for consideration under the second general head of this report, viz., the Scope of the Deacon's Functions, and ought to be reserved until the discussion of that topic. The relation of the board of deacons to the session will therefore be treated with reference to the first two aspects of the functions of the diaconate, viz., in regard to the care of the poor, and the support of the benevolent causes of the Church. The simplest method of dealing with the question

before us seems to us to be, in the first place, to compare the two bodies in respect to their ends, the nature of their power, and the objects about which that power is concerned; and in the second place, to take up the special questions, Have the deacons any autonomy? Are they in any sense possessed of independent authority? Have they any discretion in their own sphere? and if so, what is its extent?

1. Instituting a comparison then between the two bodies, we find—

(1.) That they differ in regard to their *ends*. Those of the session are spiritual; those of the board of deacons, temporal. This is generally conceded and need not be discussed. In this respect, therefore, the spheres of the two do not come together and blend with each other. Neither does that of the deacons intersect and share that of the session, nor that of the session overlap and engross that of the deacons.

(2.) They differ as to the nature of their *power*. The session is possessed of the *potestas jurisdictionis*, the power of joint rule as distinctively a court—the power to interpret and administer law, to dispense judgment in causes judicial, and to enforce discipline. Of this sort of power the deacons are entirely devoid. Their power is only that of a financial board. In this regard also it is manifest that the two bodies revolve in different orbits.

(3.) They differ further as to the *objects* about which their power is concerned, and upon which it terminates. It is agreed on all hands among us that the objects of sessional power are the Persons of the church members, and that with them diaconal power is in no degree concerned. On the other hand, it is customary to say that the objects upon which the power of the deacons terminates are Things—the moneys, the temporal substance of the Church. Here, it occurs to us, it is necessary to distinguish. The power of the session cannot be absolutely excluded from reference to things; it touches them relatively to persons. Whenever things are conceived as involving personal rights, interests, and duties, they fall within the purview of sessional power. It is for the session to determine whether in consistency with these personal rights and interests, or in obedience

to these personal obligations, contributions of things ought to be made to this or that purpose. Whether a cause shall be presented to the people, what amount of money is required for any end, what method shall be adopted to secure it, what destination the contributions of the people ordinarily shall take—these are questions relating indirectly but really to the things of the Church which the session alone has power to decide. With these questions the power of the deacons is not concerned. There is, then, an aspect of ecclesiastical things from which the application of diaconal power is debarred. Consequently the dictum that the power of the session is concerned only about persons and not things must be accepted under proper limitations. The whole practical system of our church operations evinces the justice of this opinion. But the session having decided these questions which have been designated as properly falling under its power, the things viewed as out of relation to personal rights, interests, and duties, pass under the power of the deacons. They collect them, receive them, keep them, distribute them. In fine, the power of the session in relation to things is exercised in determining the causes for which contributions are required, ordering the collections, fixing the mode of taking them, and, in cases in which offerings are made for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the general, of specifying the particular direction in which they are to be distributed. What remains is in the hands of the deacons. Thenceforward the session ceases to touch the things; they are in the control of the deacons, whose acts in regard to them, however, although not in their performance interfered with by the session, are subject to the review of that court—involving its approval or censure. And to this end, it is the duty of the board of deacons to render a periodical report of their proceedings to the session. Such, briefly stated, is the relation of the deacons to the session in regard to the objects about which their power is respectively concerned.

2. The only remaining question which we shall discuss under this head—and one perhaps presenting the most difficulty—is. Have the deacons any independent power of control in the sphere of things? Or are they the mere agents and servants of the

session—its hands to execute its will? Have they any discretion, and if so, what is its extent? and what its limitations?

Here the question is not as to ultimate accountability. The principle of responsibility runs through and pervades our whole system. Every court in it is in a measure responsible for its acts; no one of them is independent of others, so far as ultimate accountability for its proceedings is concerned. And what is true of them must in a greater degree be true of a body which does not enter as an element into the correlated series of courts. The board of deacons must be responsible, and we think, responsible to the session. On this account, we cannot but regard the adjustment of the deacons' court in the Free Church system as seriously defective. It is made, for an obvious reason, responsible to the presbytery and not to the session; and so assumes the complexion of a congregational court coördinate with the session.

Nor is the question, whether the deacons, as persons, are responsible to the session. Of course they are. Every presbyter and preacher is personally responsible not only for his ordinary conduct but for his official acts. Every instance of neglect of the poor, or mal-administration of ecclesiastical things by the deacons, may be made a subject of complaint to the session, and of censure by it. Here the principle is plain. The personal duties of the deacons, and the personal rights of the members of the Church are alike involved, and, therefore, the case falls under the cognisance and jurisdiction of the spiritual court.

But the question is, whether in the legitimate exercise of their functions in their own sphere, there is any sense in which they are independent of immediate control by the session, and may employ their own judgment and discretion in deciding for themselves. In regard to the moneys contributed to the benevolent enterprises of the Church at large, we would answer this question in the negative. From the nature of the case, no discretion is required. They are, in this respect, the mere executors of the session's will. But in regard to their chief function—the care of the poor, the case, we think, is different. Here the fact comes out distinctly that they are officers of the Church, appointed by

Christ and clothed with some authority—an authority not as rulers of persons, but as to the administration of things. “The office of deacons,” says Owen, “is an office of service, which gives no power in the rule of the Church. But being an office, it gives authority with respect unto the special work of it, under a general notion of authority; that is, a right to attend to it in a peculiar manner, and to perform the things that belong thereunto.” “Owen’s meaning is,” remarks Dr. Boggs, in a valuable article on the Deacon’s Office, in the SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW for July, 1875, “that while in the Scriptures we find no carefully drawn definition of the precise limits of the deacon’s authority, yet the fact of an office being instituted by Christ carries with it a grant of power from him to transact the duties pertaining to it in such way as their own judgment may decide.” As officers in Christ’s house, then, they would appear to be something more than mere hands of the session. They are its subordinates, but not its slaves. They may without consulting the session determine upon investigation who are worthy to receive the church’s alms, and what amounts should be appropriated to them. Just here is one of the conditions upon which their peculiar qualifications may be put into exercise. For this sort of judgment they are distinctively suited in contradistinction from the other officers, and for that reason receive their special vocation. True, they must report even these decisions to the session; but that court passes upon them, not simply as the acts of the deacons, but as acts related to the rights of the beneficiaries considered as persons under its jurisdiction, and of the members of the Church who are entitled to know how their alms are disbursed. To state the case plainly: no wise session would contravene the judgment of the deacons as to these matters, since from the nature of the case that judgment must be better founded than their own. In short, in this sphere, the deacons are not independent, any more than in any other, of the superior authority of the session for their acts, but are independent of the session in the performance of the acts. Here they have a limited and relative independency; else they were mere machines, and the title officer as applied to them would be a misnomer.

There are two other respects in which, according to our judgment, the deacons pass out of the category of mere executive agents of the courts. In the first place, they would appear to sustain to them somewhat the relation which a committee of ways and means bears to a legislature. Not that we mean to imply that they are nothing more than committees appointed by the courts, for they are distinct officers appointed by Christ and elected by the people; but their function is analogous to that of such a committee. The session, for instance, having determined that a cause falling outside of the regular schedule of those for which the stated offerings of the people are given, should be proposed to them for their contributions, it devolves upon the deacons to devise the best and most effective method of compassing the end desired. Here especially their gifts and qualifications, as official ministers of finance, are evoked into exercise, and they cease to discharge the simple functions of treasurers and clerks. Here there is a draft made peculiarly upon their judgment and their time, and in performing this function they would, to a great extent, set the spiritual officers free from the entanglements and absorbing effects of secular questions. We submit that this view of the deacon's office merits more consideration than is given to it. In this respect it rises to an importance which redeems it from neglect.

In the second place, we would signalise what is so often overlooked—the recommendatory and advisory function of deacons. It is a function which is formally recognised in some Presbyterian standards—those of the Churches of Scotland, for example, but one which among us, at least, sinks into disuse. It would be exactly congruous to their office to suggest advice and make recommendations to the spiritual courts in reference to the care of the poor, and to questions concerning the raising and management of money. As for this they are supposed to be peculiarly qualified by their gifts and habits, so to this we think they are called. How greatly their discharge of such a function would abridge the time needlessly and perhaps improperly spent by the spiritual courts in the discussion of financial plans and methods, it is not difficult to estimate. And were our Church to recognise

this as one of the functions of the diaconate, and by her practical arrangements call it out into continual exercise, the solemn words of Dr. Thornwell would meet a fulfilment which now they so sadly lack: "Our spiritual courts would soon cease to be, what they are to an alarming extent at present, mere corporations for secular business."

ARTICLE II.

THE INFLUENCE OF THEORIES OF THE WILL ON
THEOLOGY.

The connexion between certain branches of philosophy and theology cannot but be close. So close is it, in fact, that the theology of many is virtually dictated by their philosophy. The intimacy of the connexion arises from three facts. First, all truths are inter-consistent. Hence, secondly, when propositions are embraced as truths, the very nature of the reason ensures that the mind shall strive towards an inter-adjustment of them. Thirdly, theology and philosophy have in part the same fields. Both claim as their subjects God and man; theology (in its restricted sense), and anthropology. When man's philosophy thus demands adjustment with revealed propositions, his pride of thought and rationalism are but too prone to suggest that Scripture shall be moulded to suit reason, instead of reason corrected to submit to Scripture. Thus, it is familiar to the student of Church history, how materialism has dictated atheism; the utilitarian ethics have vitiated the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice; the false ontology has introduced pantheism. But theories of the will and free agency have been more influential in Christian theology than any other part of philosophy. The effects have been extensive and subtle: if "the form of sound words" has not been rejected, in many cases new meanings have been injected into

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ARTICLE I.

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL IN ITS THEOLOGICAL RELATIONS.

The articles which we published in this REVIEW for October, 1878, and January, 1879, on the subject of the Freedom of the Will in its Theological Relations, have encountered some criticism. Part of it is of so grave a character that we are under the necessity of replying. It is alleged that we are inculcating a "new theology," and that we are out of harmony with Calvin and the Calvinistic standards. We are sorry to be considered by any of our brethren as innovators in theology, for we profess to be genuine Calvinists and sincere adherents to the doctrines of the Westminster Confession; but we cannot say that we altogether regret the charge against us to the contrary, since it gives us the opportunity of still more fully vindicating the proposition with which we started—that the theory of Philosophical Necessity, as claimed by Edwards and the Determinist School to be one of universal and invariable application to all cases of moral agency, is out of accord with the Calvinistic system. We propose, in these remarks, in connexion with notices of the special difficulties which have been urged against our views, to show that we have taught the old theology—that we have maintained precisely the doctrines held by Calvin, and made symbolic in the Confessions

the state is bound so to enforce outward rest and quiet, and the cessation of secular labors and public amusements, as to honor God's natural ordinance, and to give the allied institutes, the family and the Church, their proper opportunity for doing their work on the people.

R. L. DABNEY.

ARTICLE VI.

THE DIACONATE.*

II. Secondly, we proceed to consider the scope of the deacon's functions. Under this head we design to treat the question of diaconal functions as terminating on, 1. The care of the poor; 2. The management of ecclesiastical stipends, goods, and property; 3. Collections for congregational purposes, and for the temporal support of the benevolent enterprises and the institutions of the Church; and 4. The service of the Lord's table.

FIRST. The subject of the care of the poor is distributable into three parts: the care of the poor of the Church; the care of Christian strangers; and the care of the poor of the world.

1. We will briefly consider the relation of the deacon to the poor of the Church. It is usual to regard it as the chief function of the deacon to care for the poor—that is to say, as his chief specific function. Generically considered, his office is concerned about all the temporal interests with which the Church has to do, as we hope to show under another head. As donations are spontaneously made, and legacies left, to the Church, he is the receiver; as money is to be raised for various purposes, he is the collector; as funds and property are to be kept and administered, he is the treasurer and manager; and as relief is to be extended to the poor, and stipends paid to church-officers and agents, he is the distributor. While, therefore, distribution is his principal

* This is the second part of a Report submitted to the Synod of South Carolina. It is published in the REVIEW at the request of that body. The first part may be found in the January number of the REVIEW for 1879.

and, it may be, designative function, it is by no means his only function. He is the temporal officer of the Church, appointed by Christ's authority; and consequently, all which strictly comes under the denomination of ecclesiastical temporalities falls under the scope of his functions.

As the fact that the deacon sustains an official relation to the poor of the Church is conceded on all hands, there is no need to discuss it as if it were a moot point; but taking it for granted, it may be proper to glance at some of the principles which underlie the diaconal office in this its prominent feature, and note a few of the practical inferences which may be deduced from them.

(1.) The first principle which may be mentioned as fundamental to this office is that of the unity of the Church, as expressed in the fellowship of temporal suffering. Conceived as invisible, the Church is one by reason of a spiritual life derived from Christ her Head, infused alike into all the members of his mystical body by the vitalising power of the Holy Ghost, and uniting them not as a mechanical aggregation of parts, but as a living and organic whole. Conceived as visible, and as capable of manifesting her inward life by corporal association, the Church is one as a communion of saints in the joint participation of the ordinances of God's appointment—a united worship at his altar, a common hearing of the preached gospel, and especially a holy fellowship around the sacramental board. Conceived as a visible institute susceptible of governmental organisation and polity, the Church is one by virtue of the representative principle, beginning its grand activity in the primary assemblies of Christ's professing people, uttering itself through the medium of their free suffrages, and expanding in the majestic sweep of its influence from the parochial presbytery through a correlated series of courts to a possible culmination in a supreme Œcumenical Assembly. Conceived as the suffering body of Christ, a company of pilgrims through a scene of discipline to a heavenly home, the Church is one by the fusing power of an all-pervading sympathy. So far as this sympathy is related to spiritual distress, it finds its legitimate expression through the tender and consolatory ministrations of the pastoral office; so far as it is connected with temporal want,

it meets its provided channel of expenditure in the humble but Christ-like office which was filled by the illustrious proto-martyr of the Christian Church. The deacon's function is grounded in the Church's unity of suffering. It becomes him, therefore, as the representative alike of the sympathy of Jesus for his afflicted brethren and of that of his body for its needy members, to put the material tokens of that sympathy, with loving gentleness, into the hand of the poor believer. It is easy to see that if the deacon's office were thoroughly employed, in accordance with its beneficent spirit and design, such a thing as the communistic agitation which is the great fret of secular society would be rendered impossible in the Church. The clamor of the discontented Hellenists was at once silenced by the increased vigor of diaconal ministrations. The Church is a sacred brotherhood; and if dissatisfaction arises in its bosom in consequence of a disproportionate possession of worldly goods by its members, the deacon is the appointed, and, if he use his office well, the efficient, mediator between the rich and the poor.

(2.) Another principle which grounds the office of deacon is love; in that form of it which is usually denominated charity. As discharging the function of instruction, the Church is a school; as propagating the Christian faith and inviting the nations to partake of the blessings of redemption, she is a missionary college; as performing the office of rule, she is a government, a polity—the city of God; as related to temporal want, she is an asylum for the poor and the sick, offering the advantages and conferring the benefits at once of an almshouse and a hospital. Contemplated in this last aspect, the Church not only acts as the minister of sympathy to the afflicted members of the body of Christ, but, we think, also, more generally, as the almoner of charity to the suffering and needy members of the family of man. She is by her very constitution an eleemosynary institute, and according to the extent of her means, receives as beneficiaries upon her charity every real and worthy child of want. Like redemption, in which she is founded, she bestows her benefactions upon the whole personality of man, body and soul alike, and ex-

tends her compassions, through her diaconal organs, as well to the sinner as the saint.

(3.) A third principle which underlies the deacon's office is the duty resulting from the perpetual presence of the poor in the Church. The poor, said our Master, ye have always with you. As there is no community in which the gospel is not needed by the spiritually poor, so there is none in which the Church's help is not a boon to the temporally poor. A church in which there are no poor would do well to raise the question, whether it does not lie outside the pale of God's election. For, "hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?" Christ's poor relations will ever be found where Christian organisations exist, and the nominal church which neglects to provide for them confesses itself apostate.

(4.) A fourth principle in which the deacon's office is founded is the necessity of a permanently operative official obligation, which will render certain the performance of charitable offices by the Church. Christ has not left this matter to the option of his people. The voluntary principle would not have answered, as experience has shown. Its efforts are spasmodic, its fruits but Jonah's gourds. The enthusiasm which springs out of it like a flame, burns vehemently to-day and to-morrow is cold. Possibly if the Church were a society grounded in commutative justice, and her so-called charities had been the *quid pro quo* payments upon life insurance contracts, she might have continued to exist as an organisation for mutual relief. But the free unbought ministration of charity, such as that which the Church bestows, never could have flowed on an unceasing stream through the centuries, concurrently with that of human want, had not the infinite wisdom of her Head provided against the contingency by the appointment of an officer whose business it is, under the solemn sanctions of ordination vows, to extend gratuitous relief to the poor. The duty of the Church to elect the deacon, and the obligation of the deacon to Christ, are the guarantees that diaconal functions will not fail to be discharged.

(5.) Still another principle which may be noticed as lying at

the root of the deacon's office is the unreasonableness of mingling spiritual and temporal functions. They are incongruous, and hence one of the grounds of necessity for the office of deacon as distinct from that of the minister of the word and the other kind of pastor—the ruling elder. But as this has been previously considered, we will not dwell upon it here.

In regard to the question, how the deacon may assist the poor in addition to the extension of pecuniary relief, we simply present one or two citations which are deserving of attention. From an Act of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland “anent the duties of Elders and Deacons, and on the management of the Secular Affairs of Congregations,” 1845, we extract the following clauses: “II. Respecting the peculiar duties of deacons:— . . . 4. That they watch over the education of the children of the poor” [that is, the congregational poor mentioned under a preceding head].

Lorimer, in his work on the Deaconship, says:

“In most towns there are a variety of institutions for the relief of disease, such as dispensaries, infirmaries, etc. To meet particular wants at certain seasons of the year, there are societies for clothing and fuel. There are also friendly societies and provident institutions for accumulating the savings, not, perhaps, of the poor, but of classes which may become poor. There are schools, too, for the education of children—the Sabbath and week-day school for all; the evening class for those whose education has been neglected. By making himself master of all the means of humane, literary, economical, and religious good in his district or town, and becoming acquainted also with the respective managers, an intelligent deacon may do much to prevent poverty and suffering, and greatly mitigate them where they exist.”*

There are other special offices falling under the general consideration of the care of the Christian poor, which we cannot enlarge upon in detail; such as the extension of counsel to them as to their little temporal interest, the provision of seats for them in the house of God, helping them to places at the communion-table, in fine, all the courteous attentions which the heart of the true deacon would prompt him to render to the representatives of the Master's poverty on earth.

*P. 71.

2. A few words, next, require to be said in regard to the functions of the deacon's office as terminating on the care of Christian strangers. Kindness to strangers is dictated by the instinctive feelings of nature, as is sometimes beautifully and touchingly evinced in the customs of barbarous tribes. This natural duty is reënfined in the Scriptures, and as an element of Christian ethics, guarded by the most solemn and impressive sanctions. "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward; He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye, therefore, the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." And from the wonderful and affecting account given by our Lord of the procedures of the last Judgment, we gather that some will then be surprised to learn that, in providing for strangers on earth, they had entertained unawares not angels, but the blessed Master himself. "I was a stranger, and ye took me in." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." But this office which is obligatory on the private believer is eminently incumbent on the Church, acting through her official organ, as the exponent of her charity. We add a passage from the learned Dr. John Lightfoot, in which is exhibited the practice in this matter of the Jewish Synagogue and of the Apostolic Church; and an extract from the Second Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, as a specimen of what ancient practice was, and what modern ought to be. Says the great English scholar :

"It may be observed from hence that strangers and travellers were entertained in a place near the synagogue (compare Acts xviii. 7) which was a public Xenodochion, or receptacle of strangers, at the charge of the congregation; which laudable custom, it is almost apparent, was transplanted into the Christian churches in those times: as compare such passages as those, Heb. xiii. 2; Acts xv. 4. And possibly those Agapæ, or 'feasts of charity,' spoken of in the Epistles of the Apostles, are to be understood of these loving and charitable entertainments of strangers. 'These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you

feeding themselves without fear.' False teachers, travelling abroad undiscovered, and being entertained in these public receptacles for strangers, and at the public charge, would find here a fit opportunity for themselves to vent their errors and deceptions. In this sense may Gaius very properly be understood as 'the host of the whole church', as being the officer, or chief overseer, employed by the Corinthian church for these entertainments: in which also it was almost inevitable but some women should have their employment: according to which custom we may best understand such places as these: 'Phœbe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea, she hath been a succorer of many'; 'Mary bestowed much labour on us.' Rom. xvi. 1, 6; 1 Tim. v. 9, 10."*

The passage from the Second Book of Discipline is: "The same Canons [the ancient] make mention of a fourfold distribution of the patrimony of the Church, whereof . . . the third [part was applied] to the poor, sick persons, and strangers."†

The following Canon of the Reformed Church of France suggests cautionary measures, to be taken in the assistance of strangers, which merit consideration:

"To prevent those disorders which daily fall out by reason of certificates given unto the poor, every church shall endeavour to maintain its own; and in case any one be constrained through the urgency of his affairs to travel, ministers shall examine, with the greatest care in their Consistories, the just causes of his journey, and thereupon shall give him letters directed to the next church, lying in the straight way by which he must go, specifying his name, age, stature, hair, and the place whither and the cause of his travel, and the assistance which was given him; nor shall the date of the day and year be omitted; which letters the church he is directed to shall keep by it, and give him others unto the next; and all certificates formerly given shall be torn to pieces."‡

3. In the next place, the question arises, whether the functions of the diaconate terminate on the poor of the world, as well as on the poor of the Church?

There has not been much discussion of this subject, so far as we have been able to discover, although some difference of opinion has existed in regard to it. We venture to support the position: that deacons, as official organs for the ministration of ecclesiastical charity, ought, when warranted by the ability of the church,

* *Works*, London, 1823, Vol. III., p. 274.

† Chap. IX., §4; Dunlop's *Confessions*.

‡ Quick's *Synodicon*, Discipline, Ch. IV., Can. IV., p. 29.

to extend relief to the poor of the outside world. Before stating the reasons which we have to offer in behalf of this view, we cite a few testimonies in its favour :

Voetius, the distinguished Dutch writer on Presbyterian polity, speaking of deacons, says : "That they may exercise beneficence towards all men, especially towards those who are of the household of faith."*

Dr. Timothy Dwight, of New England, gives a striking quotation from the Emperor Julian, known in ecclesiastical history as the Apostate :

"If Hellenism [that is, the religion of the heathen] does not prosper according to our wish, it is the fault of those who profess it. Why do we not look to that which has been the principal cause of the augmentation of impiety [that is, the Christian religion]: humanity to strangers, care in burying the dead, and that sanctity of life, of which they make such a show? It is a shame that when the impious Galilæans [that is, Christians] relieve not only their own people, but ours also, our poor should be neglected by us. . . . It having so happened, as I suppose, that the poor were neglected by our priests, the impious Galilæans, observing this, have addicted themselves to this kind of humanity; and by the show of such good offices have recommended the worst of things [that is, the Christian religion]; for, beginning with their love-feasts, and the ministry of tables, as they call it (for not only the name but the thing is common among them), they have drawn away the faithful to impiety."

In regard to this passage President Dwight remarks :

"We have here the strongest evidence, that the ancient Christians, down to the days of Julian, maintained the charity of the gospel to their poor and suffering brethren, and to strangers also. . . . It is plain also, that in the view of this emperor, this charity was a primary reason why Christianity prevailed in the world. For he exhibits his full conviction that it was impossible to spread heathenism by any other means than a strenuous imitation of this excellent character. The justness of these opinions is in my view unquestionable."†

Lorimer, in his work on the Deaconship, has the following remarks :

"The leading duty of the office is unquestionably the care of the poor. Here a question, however, arises, what poor? Is it the general poor

* *Eccles. Polity*, Vol. III., p. 496.

† *Theology*, Sermon. CLV.

of the community, whether religious or irreligious, or is the office intended only for the Christian poor? This is a very important inquiry. There can be no doubt that the poor members of the congregation are the *peculiar* objects of the deacon's care, and are, it may be, entitled to a higher provision; but the question is, Is the deacon to exclude all other poor from his special regard? . . . Besides her own poor, she [the Church] is surrounded with many poor who do not belong, by living membership, to her communion. . . . There is no authority in Scripture for restricting the donations of the deacon to poor *communicants*. . . It is an honorable light in which Christianity is presented, when she appears as the friend of the poor, even those who do not make a profession of religion."*

These testimonies serve to show that we are not promulgating a new and peculiar view when we express the opinion that the Church should, through the deacon as the almoner of her charities, so far as her circumstances will permit it, extend relief to the outside poor.

To this position it may be objected, that injustice would be done to the needy and suffering members of the church—that bread would be taken from the children's mouths and given to strangers and aliens. To this we reply that the qualifications appended to the proposition we have submitted, provide against such a contingency. The poor of the Church ought to be preferred before the poor of the world. But where both can be helped without injustice to needy communicants, both ought to be helped.

It may be objected, in the next place, that the Church is not able to provide relief for both classes of the poor; that the outside poor are a great multitude who would speedily drain her resources; in short, that the thing is impossible. We answer, that we have only contended for such a discharge of this beneficent office as would consist with the Church's ability. If she cannot, she cannot; that's all. But if she can, she ought, to the extent of her ability, no more.

It may be objected, in the third place, that State provision is made for the poor, and that the Church would perform a superfluous office in attempting to relieve the wants of those who are

*Chap. VII., pp. 66, 67, 69.

able to draw from the treasury of the State. To this it may be replied: First, that the same objection would in part hold against the relief of the Church's poor, since they are equally with other poor entitled to State provision. Secondly, the Church poor are not debarred from participating in the State provision because the Church relieves them; why should the State poor be excluded from Church provision because the State relieves them? Thirdly, the payment of a State tax for the poor is a mere duty exacted upon penalties; but God requires charity freely bestowed. The Church is the organ of that charity, and the deacon the hand of the Church. If, therefore, it is true that the members of the Church contribute to the payment of the tax, that fact does not exempt them from the obligation to be also charitable to the poor. That obligation is independent of all human provision for the poor. It is imposed by God himself.

The following considerations, concisely stated, are offered in justification of the view which we have advanced:

(1.) The genius and spirit of the gospel, as a scheme of redemption for the souls and bodies of men, freely offered to all who will avail themselves of its provisions, are in favor of it.

(2.) The precepts of Scripture enforce it, both of the Old and the New Testaments. "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor and to the stranger: I am the Lord thy God."* "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner."† The touching parable of the good Samaritan, with its lesson, "Go and do thou likewise," and the apostolic exhortation, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," may be taken as plain examples of New Testament instruction on the subject. The fact that these precepts are specially addressed to individuals, makes no difference. We have long accepted the principle that

*Lev. xxiii. 22.

†Lev. xxv. 35.

the duty of charity which is incumbent on the private believer is emphatically and eminently imposed upon the official organ of the Church's alms.

(3.) We plead the example of the Lord Jesus in support of this view—a consideration which, if there were room, might be impressively expanded. It must suffice to say, that no suppliant for bodily help ever left his presence unblest. The fact of need was enough to secure his help. The members of the Church in which he was born were not the only recipients of his charity. The daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman—a member of a foreign and accursed race—was rescued by his mercy from bodily degradation and torture, as well as from Satanic oppression of mind. The inference is obvious. The Church is, in a sense, the representative of his charity in the midst of an afflicted world, and the deacon is the agent of her benefactions.

(4.) As the Church gives the gospel, containing spiritual relief, to all men indiscriminately, so, as far as it is compatible with her ability and circumstances to do so, ought she to extend temporal and bodily help to all. We recognise this principle in the admitted legitimacy of rendering charitable assistance to the heathen, as, for example, to the Chinese who recently suffered under the ravages of famine; and we do not hesitate to raise collections in our churches for the relief of our fellow-citizens of all classes, irrespectively of religious relations, who may be crushed down by calamity, as, for instance, those who suffer from the dread visitation of pestilence.

(5.) The view under consideration seems to be enforced by the principle of reciprocity. Some persons of the world, who are *not* poor, help the Church by the free contribution of their means; why should not the Church help some persons of the world who *are* poor, by the bestowal of her charities.

(6.) The effects of such a practice, particularly if generally adopted, would effectually vindicate it against all objections. If the Church would extend temporal relief somewhat as she affords spiritual; if all churches, of all denominations, would do it, what splendid results would be reached! What impressions for good would be made upon the masses of the outside-world, who are ever attracted more by the palpable benefits of material bene-

factions than by the viewless blessings of a spiritual religion ! What a check would, moreover, be given to Socialism, that tremendous threat to modern society ! And let it not be said that the Church would thus practically offer bribes to the outside poor to draw them into her communion, and would purchase her conquests by her gold. It is difficult to see how the bestowal of charity upon those who remain outside of the Church can be any greater inducement to a profession of religion than the fact that only those who are inside the Church can be beneficiaries upon her bounty. If any bribe, if any solicitation, there be to outsiders, it would seem to be more fairly imputable to the invitation : Come in among us, and then we will help you. But the ascription of any such motive to the Church, on what plan soever she proceeds, is utterly unfair and unjustifiable. It is the old slander of the Church that she won the heathen by her largesses. No doubt her extension of help to the poor would have a tendency to attract them to her communion ; but that would be an incidental and not an intentional result.

In connexion with this aspect of our subject, it is proper to advert to the question, What ought to be the course pursued by the Church as to the diaconal administration of relief to the suffering, in seasons of heavy public calamity, such as the prevalence of a destructive pestilence ? It has been said, in the tone of criticism, that at such times the eleemosynary agencies of the Church melt away. The subject is a difficult one, and merits a more thorough discussion than the limits of this report will afford. We venture only a few suggestions. In the first place, it would be utterly unfair to infer, from the fact that at such times the organised efforts of particular churches within the circle of the supposed calamity come to a temporary close, that the Church neglects to furnish assistance to the stricken community. On the contrary, we have no doubt that the amounts collected for that purpose by churches outside of the suffering territory constitute a considerable part—we are not prepared to say precisely what part—of the general fund derived from all sources for the relief of the needy. They go, however, with sums contributed from secular sources, into the hands of secular administrators, and so are sunk out of view as churchly contributions.

In the second place, the question presses, Ought the diaconal functions of churches so circumstanced to be suspended? We are disposed to think that the deacons, as well as the minister and elders, ought, if possible, to remain at their posts; and even if the ordinary and stated meetings should be interrupted and the collections consequently arrested, they should continue their offices of love to individuals, and should act as channels through which the contributions of outside churches and persons might be distributed. The deacons of all the Presbyterian churches in a community ought, in such seasons, to combine into a working committee, and we think should form a further union with official committees from the churches of all other Protestant denominations. This consolidated committee would constitute the medium of distributing Church contributions from every part of the land to the needy of all classes, without distinction as to religious faith. And as further combination would probably be necessary, this general committee of the Churches might cooperate with whatever secular organisation controls the distribution of relief, for the accomplishment of an end made common by a universal affliction. Two results at least would flow from such a course of action: a serious effort would be made, in accordance with her sacred vocation, to operate in an organic capacity for the relief of the suffering; and the reproach would be removed that she vanishes with her whole apparatus of ordinances and agencies before the onset of a public calamity.

In the third place, if the Church suffer her organised and official methods of work to lapse in the presence of severe public trials, it is not surprising that the means and the energies of her members should flow into secular channels, and that thus the honor be lost for her which might otherwise be won. Other organisations would receive the credit of what her own members achieve, and the glory of her Lord be tarnished. If, on the other hand, when these official methods are in operation, members of the Church should expend in secular channels the energies and the money which ought to be employed in the furtherance of ecclesiastical ends, and then turn and rebuke the Church for inefficiency, they kiss their mother and betray her to her foes.

SECONDLY. We pass on to the discussion of the question, whether the deacon's office includes the management of the stipends, revenues, goods, and property, real and personal, of the Church. Our Book of Church Order, Form of Government, Chapter II., Section IV., Article IV., says of deacons: "To them also may be properly committed the charge of the temporal affairs of the Church"; and in Chapter IV., Section IV., Article II.: "To the deacons also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the Church." We are free to admit that this does not enforce the obligation to make the deacons curators and managers of church property. But it sanctions such a measure. There is nothing in the terms of the Constitution to hinder any particular church from adopting such a course. The way is clear for it to do so, as far as any constitutional bar is concerned. We are not prepared to say, with some, that the word "properly" contains a recommendation of the committal of church property to the care and management of deacons. The language of the law seems, in view of the known practice of many churches, to imply that the opposite course is not improper. It has the effect of making the question an open one, to be determined according to the judgment of each particular congregation. We regret that such is the construction which we are constrained to put upon the terms of the law. We would have had it otherwise if we could; we would have greatly preferred the mandatory "ought to be" of the Memphis Book of 1866 to the permissive "may be" of that which we have adopted. But so it is; and we avail ourselves of the option in the matter which is allowed to the churches, and the absence of all constitutional obstacles in the way of argument, to show the reasonableness and the scripturalness of the committal of the whole property of the Church to diaconal administration. We begin by citing in favor of this view testimonies from Church standards and eminent theologians.

The Discipline of the Reformed Churches of France, Chapter I., Canon XLIII. :

"No pastor, under the title of pastor, shall be permitted to possess an inheritance: but in case his stipend or any part thereof were assigned

upon some particular tenement, rent, or revenue, the whole shall be administered by the deacons, or other persons commissioned and ordained thereunto by the churches; through whose hands the minister shall receive his pension, that so all suspicion of covetousness may be removed, and lest by such worldly cares he should be diverted from the weightier duties of his calling.*

The First Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland:

Chapter VIII., § 3: "We require the deacons and treasurers rather to receive the rents than the ministers themselves. . . . We think it expedient that common treasurers, viz., the deacons, be appointed . . . to receive the whole rents appertaining to the kirk."

Chapter VIII., § 8: "The receivers and collectors of these rents and duties must be the deacons or treasurers."

Chapter X., § 11: "The office of deacons, as before said, is to receive the rents and gather the alms of the kirk, to keep and distribute the same."

The Second Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland:

Chapter VIII., § 3: "Their [the deacons'] office and power is to receive and distribute the whole ecclesiastical goods, . . . that the patrimony of the kirk and poor be not converted to private men's uses, nor wrongfully distributed."

Chapter IX., §§ 1, 3: "By the patrimony of the kirk, we mean whatsoever thing hath been at any time before, or shall be in times coming, given, or, by consent or universal custom of countries professing the Christian religion, applied to the public use and utility of the kirk. So that under the patrimony we comprehend all things given, or to be given, to the kirk and service of God, as lands, buildings, possessions, annual rents, and all such like, wherewith the kirk is endowed, whether by donations, foundations, mortifications, or any other lawful titles of kings, princes, or any persons inferior to them; together with the continual oblations of the faithful. We comprehend also all such things as by laws or custom, or use of countries, have been applied to the use and utility of the kirk; of the which sort are teinds, manses, glebes, and such like, which by common and municipal laws and universal custom are possessed by the kirk. . . .

"The goods ecclesiastical ought to be collected and distributed by the deacons, as the word of God appoints, that they who bear office in the kirk be provided for without care or solicitude. In the apostolical Church, the deacons were appointed to collect and distribute whatever was collected of the faithful to distribute unto the necessity of the saints, so that none lacked among the faithful. These collections were not only of that which was collected in manner of alms,

*Quick, Synodicon, Introd., p. 24.

as some suppose ; but other goods, movable and immovable, of lands and possessions, the price whereof was brought to the feet of the Apostles. This office continued in the deacons' hands who intermeddled with the whole goods of the Church ; ay, and while the estate thereof was corrupted by Antichrist, as the Ancient Canons bear witness."

The Free Church of Scotland, Act anent the Administration of the Secular Affairs of the Church and the Appointment of Deacons, 1843:

"4. In addition to these general boards of administration [that is, for the Church at large], there must be local bodies to take charge of the secular affairs of particular congregations. For this purpose, and on various and very important grounds, the Committee cannot hesitate to recommend that this administration should be exclusively vested in deacons chosen by the congregation, to be conducted in accordance with such general regulations as may be agreed to by a subsequent Assembly.

"While the ultimate object to be kept in view is to have a sufficient body of deacons for the administration of secular affairs in each congregation, the Committee are aware that in some instances it may be impossible immediately to accomplish this ; and in the meanwhile they would suggest that in such cases elders might be allowed to attend to these matters in addition to their own peculiar duties ; every exertion being made, however, that the period during which they should continue so burdened should be as short as possible."* [The Committee's Report was adopted.]

Act anent the Duties of Elders and Deacons, and on the Management of the Property and Secular Affairs of Congregations, 1844:

"II. Respecting the peculiar duties of deacons: 1. That they give special regard to the whole secular affairs of the congregation."†

"The following extract," remarks Willson, in his *Essay on the Deacon*. "from a 'Catechism on the Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church,' compiled by Presbyterian divines in Britain, and which has had a large circulation in the Scottish churches and in the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster, shows that the doctrines advocated in this *Essay* are taught in these churches. The quotations which follow are from the third edition, Glasgow, 1838, Chapter I., Quest. 15: 'What are the ordinary church officers appointed by Christ? Ans. Presbyters or elders (called also bishops or overseers) and deacons. Quest. 31: For what duty were they [deacons] appointed? Ans. To manage the temporal

*Acts of the Free Church for 1843.

†Acts of the Free Church for 1844.

affairs of the Church, and especially to attend to the wants of the poor, in order that the Apostles or teachers might give themselves continually to the ministry of the word.' '*

These references are sufficient to show that, whatever may have been the defects of their practice, the doctrine of the various branches of the Presbyterian Church, as expressed in their formularies, has been to a great extent in favor of committing to deacons the management of all ecclesiastical goods. The difficulty is that the practice has, in great measure, been out of harmony with the doctrine of the Church—an inconsistency which tends to bring the doctrine itself into contempt. It is true that the law of our own Church has not been explicitly developed in the direction of that of the French and Scottish Churches; but it is to be hoped that the spirit of inquiry which now appears to be aroused in regard to the subject will issue in bringing our Constitution, in this respect, into harmony with that view which has been set forth in the purest standards of Presbyterianism. The Scotch and American Presbyterian Churches ought, in relation to the Diaconate, to be governed by the full and positive utterances of the First and Second Books of Discipline rather than by the inadequate and unsatisfactory statement of the Westminster Form of Government.

We go on to adduce the opinions of distinguished theologians:

Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*: "These seven approved men were by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the apostles ordained deacons for the public administration of the Church's affairs." †

Origen: "The deacons preside over the money-tables of the Church, as we are taught in the Acts of the Apostles." ‡

Sozomen, the *Ecclesiastical* historian: "The deacon's office was to keep the Church's goods." §

Calvin: "Nor was the case of deacons then [during the Nicene period] different from what it had been under the Apostles. For they received the daily offerings of the faithful, and the annual revenues of the Church, that they might apply them to their true uses; in other words, partly in maintaining ministers, and partly in supporting the poor." ||

"Now let the deacons come forward, and show their most sacred distribution of ecclesiastical goods." ¶

**The Deacon*, p. 37, footnote. †*Lib. II., C. I.*

‡Treatise 16th upon Matthew, quoted by Willson. §Quoted by Willson ||*Institutes*, B. IV., C. IV., §5. ¶*Ibid.*, B. IV., C. V., §15.

“But the deacons have the treasures of the Church to dispense, that is to say, such as are wholly dedicated to God, and ought not in any wise to be applied to profane uses. . . For the goods of the church, as we call them, ought to be applied no other but to the use of the Church, that is to say, to find the ministers, to find school-masters, which serve to preserve the seed of the Church, and such other like things, and specially to find the poor.”*

Voetius, in his great work, *The Ecclesiastical Polity*: “Hither refer all those special modes of acquiring which Zepperus indicates in the place cited and others to be prudently thought out by the deacons.”†

Steuart of Pardovan: “By the ninth chapter of the Policy of the Kirk, deacons were not only to collect and distribute the ordinary alms, but all the church-goods, teinds, etc., and uplift and pay to the ministers their stipends. This were indeed a work proper for their office, an ease to the minister, and would prevent much noise and offence that is raised, when charges to make payment are given, either at their own instance, or in the name of their assignees or factors.”‡

Alexander Henderson, one of the illustrious Scotch Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, in his *Treatise on the Government and Order of the Church of Scotland*, quoted by Lorimer:§ “Their [the deacons’] main duty is to collect, receive, and distribute not only the alms for the poor, but the whole ecclesiastical goods, which are not assigned and appointed for the maintenance of particular persons.”

Samuel Rutherford, another renowned Commissioner from Scotland to the Westminster Assembly, and Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews’, in his *Due Right of Presbyteries*: “I cannot well deny but it is apparent from Acts vi. 4, that the apostles themselves were once those who cared for the poor; but I deny that hence it follows in the case of fewer poor that the office can return to the pastor, as to the first subject, except you suppose the intervention of a divine institution to place it again in the pastors; and considering the afflictions of the churches, the object of the deacons’ ‘giving’ and ‘shewing mercy,’ as it is Rom. xii. 8, cannot be wanting, as that the church’s fabric be kept in good frame, the poor, the captives of Christian churches, etc., be relieved.”¶

David Dickson, an “influential member of the Reforming Assembly, 1638”: “But the deacons not a little aided by their ministrations; for they took care respecting the salary of ministers, and the necessities of the saints, and distributed the public goods of the church.”

“The official treasurers of the church are referred to [Rom. xii. 8—‘he that giveth’]; those who distribute the goods of the church, and the contributions of the faithful, for the public uses of the church.”**

* *Sermon 24 on 1 Timothy*, quoted by Willson. † Vol. III., p. 501.

‡ *Collections*, p. 31. § *The Diaconship*, p. 85.

¶ London Ed., pp. 160, 163: quoted by Willson.

** *Expositio Epistolarum*, 1645; quoted by Willson.

John Owen, in his *Treatise on the True Nature of a Gospel Church*: "Whereas, the reason of the institution of this office was in general to free the pastors of the churches who labor in the word and doctrine from avocations by outward things, such as wherein the church is concerned, it belongs unto the deacons not only to take care of and provide for the poor, but to manage all other affairs of the church of the same kind; such as are providing for the place of the church-assemblies, of the elements for the sacraments, of collecting, keeping, and disposing of the stock of the church for the maintenance of its officers and incidences, especially in the time of trouble or persecution."*

Dr. John Lightfoot: "And therefore it is no wonder if the apostles were so circumspect in their election and so observant in their ordination. For these seven were to take this work of the apostles out of their hands, and to dispose of the stock of the church."†

"The function to which the deacon was appointed by the apostles was to manage the pecuniary affairs of the church, and especially to preside over the collections and disbursements for the poor."‡

The London Ministers, authors of the *Divine Right of Presbyterian Church Government*: "The deacons being specially to be trusted with the church's goods and the disposal thereof, according to the direction of the Presbytery, for the good of the church," etc.§

Ridgley, in his *Body of Divinity*: "Others [that is, other church-officers besides pastors and ruling elders] who have the oversight of the secular affairs of the church, and the trust of providing for the necessities of the poor committed to them, who are called deacons."||

Dr. Samuel Miller, of Princeton: "It is a great error to suppose that deacons cannot be appropriately and profitably employed in various other ways, besides ministering to the poor of the church. They might, with great propriety, be made the managers of all the money-tables, or fiscal concerns of each congregation: and, for this purpose, might be incorporated, if it were thought necessary, by law, that they might be enabled regularly to hold and employ all the property, real and personal, of the church."¶

Dr. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston: "All the Reformed churches agree in believing that the Scriptures clearly point out deacons as distinct officers in the church, whose business it is to take care of the poor, to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use, and generally to manage the temporal affairs of the church."**

Dr. Thornwell, in his *Argument against Church-Boards*, remarks: "The Book provides that our churches should be furnished with a class of

*Chap. IX., *Works*, Goold's Ed., Vol. XVI., p. 147.

†*Works*, Lond., 1823, Vol. VIII., p. 107.

‡*Ibid.*, p. 249. §P. 184. ||Phila. Ed., Vol. II., p. 553.

¶*Essay on Ruling Elder*, p. 244. ***Presbytery and Prelacy*, p. 242.

officers for the express purpose of attending to the temporal affairs of the church."

In the *Argument for Church-Boards Answered*, he says: "But it seems that deacons are to be intrusted with nothing but the care of the poor. Is the Reviewer yet to learn, that the common method of instruction pursued in the Scriptures is to inculcate general truths by insisting on their particular applications, rather than dealing in abstract statements? Our Saviour teaches the doctrine of a special providence, by pointing to the fowls of the air, the lilies of the field, and the hairs of our heads. Just as in the contemplation of the works of nature we rise to the abstract from the concrete, the general from the particular, so in the book of Revelation we are often to pursue the same process of cautious and accurate induction. When our Saviour is asked, Who is our neighbor? he gives no formal and elaborate definition; he simply states a case, and from that case the principle may be gathered. The Decalogue itself can be proved to be a perfect law only by admitting the principle that 'under one sin or duty all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded'—many of the precepts containing only examples of a large class. As, then, it is frequently the method of Scripture to teach by example, where is the impropriety in supposing that the attention to the poor enjoined upon the deacons was intended to include the whole department of secular business with which the church was to be concerned? It is certain that the reason assigned by the apostles for ordering their election applies just as strongly to the collection and disbursement of funds for one purpose as for another. Their purpose was not to get rid of attending to the poor, but to get rid of secular distractions. 'It is not reason,' said they, 'that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables . . . But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word.' What would they have gained by divesting themselves of the care of the poor, and continuing to be perplexed with the collection of funds for all other purposes? It must be perfectly obvious to every candid mind that the entire secular business of the church was intrusted to the deacons; that one specific duty is mentioned, in accordance with the general method of Scripture, as a specimen of a class, and that the reason of the appointment determines the extent of the duties imposed."*

To these names might be added those of distinguished commentators, who, in their exposition of the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, take the ground that the seven were deacons, and that the scope of their functions included the administration of all the secular affairs of the Church. It is true that the learned Vitringa, in his great work on the Synagogue, maintains the view that the seven were not deacons, such as those

* *Collected Writings*. Vol. IV., pp. 154, 200, 201.

permanent officers whom Paul addressed in his letter to the Philippians, and whose qualifications he describes in his first Epistle to Timothy, but were simply "stewards" appointed to meet the emergency in the affairs of the infant Church by the discharge of an extraordinary and temporary function.* This opinion, although ingeniously defended, is manifestly paradoxical; for, "although," as Dr. Addison Alexander remarks, "the title *deacon* is not used in this passage, nor indeed in this whole book, yet the judgment of the Church has in all ages recognised this as . . . that office, the continuance of which in other places and in later times is inferred from 1 Tim. iii. 8, 12; Phil. i. 1; Rom. xvi. 1."†

We have, it is believed, adduced sufficient authority from the past to show that we are very far from innovating, in contending for the position, that the management of all ecclesiastical goods and property ought to be committed to the deacons, as officers of Christ's appointment. The French and Scotch Formularies of Government, and the great names which have been mentioned as supporting this view—among which shine those of Calvin, Henderson, Rutherford, Owen, and Thornwell—must be confessed to carry with them to Presbyterians a heavy presumptive weight. It is the practice of the majority of our churches, under what we must consider the unhappy license furnished by the language of our particular Constitution, which has been characterised by novelty; and in abandoning it for that which is advocated in this paper, we would return to the older and the better paths.

Having endeavored to remove the difficulty by which this question is likely to be encumbered, at its very threshold, to wit, that the practice for which we contend would involve a departure from prescriptive usage, and be liable to the charge of novelty, we proceed, under the limitations of a necessary brevity, to adduce arguments in favor of the committal, wherever it is practicable, of the care and management of all ecclesiastical stipends, goods, and property to deacons. And in entering upon the discussion it is expedient that we take with us, as regulative data,

* *De Synagoga Vetere*, Lib. III., Pars II., Cap. V.

† *Comm.* on Acts vi. 6.

certain great principles concerning which there is, among ourselves at least, no dispute, but which, in doubtful cases of ecclesiastical practice, it is always needful to restate and confirm; such, for instance, as these: That the Lord Jesus, as he is the sole Priest, by whose blood the salvation of the Church was purchased, so, also, is the sole Prophet whose instructions she is to hear, and the sole King whose authority she is to obey; that he has left none of the real wants of the Church unsupplied, but has made ample provision for them all; and that as she has a temporal as well as a spiritual side, is composed of the bodies as well as the souls of his people, he has in his word secured her interests in both these relations; that without a warrant from his word, which is the constitutional law of the Church, either explicitly given in it or derived from it by good and necessary consequence, no element can lawfully exist, no office be established, no measure be adopted, within the whole extension of the ecclesiastical sphere; that a good and necessary consequence—a logical and therefore legitimate inference from facts, statements, principles, in the divine word—is, with us, formally acknowledged to be of equal authority with the word itself, and when declared to the Church bind her conscience and enforce her practice; that there ought not to be a union of secular and ecclesiastical organisations, or an admixture of secular and ecclesiastical authority in the administration of any affairs which properly come under the denomination of ecclesiastical; and that, on the other hand at the same time, there are natural and civil rights which should not be trespassed upon by ecclesiastical prerogative or requirement—the natural and civil right, for example, of the owners of property to control its management and use. We shall mainly follow the line of these principles in developing the considerations we have to submit.

1. The applicability of these principles to the case in hand must depend upon the definition of the things under consideration, namely, stipends, goods, and property. If they are ecclesiastical, they fall under their scope; if not, they lie outside of it. It is plain that we cannot define in this case from the nature of the things, in themselves considered, for the simple reason that

in their own nature they do not differ from precisely similar things employed for secular purposes. A church-building, for example, does not, in itself, differ from a building devoted to secular uses, as is proved by the fact that it may be, under certain circumstances, alienated from its original purpose. It may become a school-house, or a ware-room, or a place of public meetings of any character whatsoever. We must look, therefore, for a ground of definition to something peculiar to these things and predicable of them alone. That distinctive mark is the end for which they are employed. That end is ecclesiastical. Salaries of ministers, church-buildings, church-lands, church-revenues, all derive their denomination from the end upon which they terminate. And as the end is ecclesiastical, and that gives them their peculiarity which discriminates them from all other kinds of property, all other sorts of things, we properly call them ecclesiastical things, and assign them to the temporal department of the ecclesiastical sphere. They are things set apart and devoted to the service of God as conceived under the idea of the Church. Let it be observed, then, that the things of which we speak are ecclesiastical as contradistinguished from secular things.

(1.) This being granted, it follows that the appointment of trustees, or committees, other than the ordained officers of Christ's house, to take care of and manage these ecclesiastical things, is an infraction of the first principle signalled, viz., that the Lord Jesus is the sole Prophet, whose instructions we are to hear, and the sole King, whose authority we are to obey. For man's wisdom and man's authority ground the appointment of such officers, and consequently usurp the place of Christ's wisdom and Christ's authority. Officers of purely human creation are set over ecclesiastical and devoted things which fall under the control of Christ within the limits of his Church. His wisdom is impugned and his will disregarded.

If this view be just, we are discharged from the necessity of considering the injurious effects, the dangers, the want of guarantees for a safe administration of church funds, accruing from the substitution of humanly appointed agents in the place of the ordained officers of Christ's house. The great principle which we

have erected as a standard is sufficient to settle our practice, since it binds our conscience. If its applicability to this case is valid, we need no other argument. The law of our King is enough—we adore and obey. Those who wish to see the argument from expediency ably handled may consult the Essay of the Rev. James M. Willson, of Philadelphia, to which allusion has already been made.

(2.) If we discard deacons and place other officers, of man's call and appointment, over the temporal things of the Church, we violate the second principle, which we acknowledge to control our practice, to wit, that the Lord Jesus has left none of the wants of the Church unsupplied, but has made ample provision for them all; and that as she has a temporal as well as a spiritual side, is composed as well of the bodies as the souls of his people, he has in his word secured her interests in both these relations. It is certain that if our Lord did not in the appointment of the office of deacons make provision for the care and administration of the temporal affairs of his Church, he has made no such provision. He has appointed no guardian of her secular interests, no officer of finance, no treasurer of his kingdom, if the deacon be not assigned by his authority to that office. It is not conceivable that this omission to provide by Christ's own instructions for the complete welfare and efficiency of his Church would have occurred. And the case involves, we cannot forbear to think, an insult to his wisdom and his love for his people, when it is supposed necessary to invoke human wisdom to supply the defect, and human authority to create the absent and needed office.

(3.) But if the question be, by what right these extra-ecclesiastical agents are appointed to administer ecclesiastical affairs, we encounter the third great principle which we have assumed, the neglect of which is one potent reason why the Church so soon developed a tendency to abandon the purity of an apostolic condition, and let in a flood of errors and corruptions into the departments of doctrine, government, worship, and distribution; and that she has repeated the same disastrous course, whenever it has pleased God to interpose with his recovering and reviving grace, and lifting her from the mouth of the grave as by a resurrection

power, to give her a fresh start and invite her to a new career of obedience, prosperity, and glory. We allude to the mighty principle, that without a warrant from his word, which is the constitutional law of the Church, either explicitly given in it, or derived from it by good and necessary consequence, no element can lawfully exist, no office be lawfully established, no measure be lawfully adopted, within the whole extent of the ecclesiastical sphere. Now, where is the warrant, express or implied, in the Scriptures for Trustees, or Committee-men, appointed by men apart from and to the exclusion of the ordained officers of the church, to administer its temporal affairs? To say that, in the absence of a scriptural warrant, their appointment is authorised by necessity, is to say that the Saviour has left his Church incompletely equipped for her work, nay, for the protection and conservation of her own existence. To say that a secular corporation has the right and authority to make these appointments, is either to invalidate and deny Christ's authority in the ecclesiastical sphere, or to except the stipends, goods, and property of the Church from the category of ecclesiastical, and reduce them to the denomination of merely secular things. We have but little doubt that this last supposition lies at the root of the practice against which we are contending. We do not impute to those who cheerfully support the institutions of the Church, a conscious and deliberate intention to cast any discredit upon Christ's wisdom or authority, or upon the offices which he has created. But we have seen that the things which are usually assigned to the care of secular trustees and committees, are really ecclesiastical things, and that, consequently, they cannot be legitimately treated as secular. If this could only be distinctly apprehended, there can be little doubt that the incongruity would be clearly perceived of putting secular officers over ecclesiastical things, or of extending divinely ordained officers from their proper sphere, by filling it with those of man's election. But if no warrant can be pleaded from Scripture for the existence of these extra-ecclesiastical officers within the ecclesiastical sphere, what is left us, but to change our practice in this matter and conform it wherever practicable to the requirements of the Word?

(4.) If the question be pressed, by what warrant from the Scriptures the management of church-property should be committed to deacons, we ground our answer in the fourth principle to which we have adverted, namely, that a good and necessary consequence—a logical and therefore legitimate inference from facts, statements, and principles contained in the divine word—is, with us, formally acknowledged to be of equal authority with the word itself, and, when declared to the Church, bind her conscience and enforce her practice.

In the first place, it is admitted that the deacon was divinely charged with ministration to the temporal relief of the poor. The sixth chapter of the Acts definitely settles that point. The office of the deacon, therefore, is concerned about a temporal business in which money and provision of other kinds for the maintenance of the body must be handled and managed. Now if, as we have already argued, the Head of the Church could not have left her unprovided with officers whose duty it would be to look to her temporal interests, and administer her secular affairs, we are constrained to infer that he who was certainly charged with one department of secular duties, would be appointed to the discharge of all such duties. Reasoning from the analogy of the deacon's office as related to the temporal relief of the poor, contemplating its very genius and spirit, the inference is a legitimate one, that whatever other function of a temporal character was to be performed for the benefit of the Church, would be imposed likewise upon him who was designated and known as the temporal officer.

In the second place, this inference is immensely enhanced by the reason assigned by the apostles for not yielding to the solicitation of the Hellenist believers that they would personally superintend the daily distribution of relief to the poor: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." It is perfectly legitimate to infer that this reason holds good in regard to all business of a temporal or secular kind. We have already heard Dr. Thornwell arguing that the apostles would have gained little by divesting themselves of the care of the poor and continuing to be perplexed by the management of other secular affairs. Indeed, it was not attention to the relief of the

poor to which they objected, but the distractions resulting from secular business, of which the ministry to the poor was a part. The case must to his judgment have been very clear, to impel him to say: "It must be perfectly obvious to every candid mind that the entire secular business of the church was intrusted to the deacons."

In the third place, the concurrent judgment of the Church, which cannot be affected by the opinions of a few exceptional thinkers, like Vitranga, has been that the officers whose election is narrated in the sixth chapter of the Acts, were deacons; and that the officers whom Paul afterwards addressed under that title, and whose qualifications he furnishes, were charged with the performance of the same functions. That being so, it follows that, if our inferential reasoning has been valid, the management of the temporal business of the Church ought, on scriptural grounds, always to have been committed, ought now to be committed, to the hands of the deacons.

(5.) If the ground be taken, that the non-communicating members of a congregation, who are contributors to its support, or donors of church property, have a right to joint control, through officers in whose election they have a voice, with the officers of the church; or that a corporation, composed partly of communicating members of a church and partly of non-communicating attendants, may elect trustees representing both these elements—the secular and ecclesiastical—we meet the case with the acknowledged principle, that there ought not to be a union of secular and ecclesiastical organisations, or an admixture of secular and ecclesiastical authority, in the management and administration of any affairs which are properly denominated ecclesiastical. None among us would hesitate to apply this great principle to a union of Church and State, for the accomplishment of ecclesiastical ends; but what essential difference is there between that case, and the case of the coexistence and coöperation of communicants and non-communicants for the management of ecclesiastical property, and, therefore, for the attainment of an ecclesiastical end, except that one is enacted upon a larger, and the other upon a smaller scale? Let the principle which we here hold up to notice be

faithfully applied to all cases, and it will exclude the coalition of secular and ecclesiastical authority as well on the narrow theatre of particular congregational societies, as on the wider one of the Church as an organic whole. It does not constitute any valid objection to this view, that the influence and power exerted by the secular element in an ecclesiastical corporation is professedly and actually limited to the merely temporal interests of the Church; for, first, we have seen that the temporal things of the Church are ecclesiastical things, and that there are officers of Christ's appointment whose function he has ordained to terminate on those things, and to whom alone they ought therefore to be intrusted. Secondly, those who exercise a controlling influence over the temporal interests of the Church, have necessarily, from the intimate relation between them, some power, it may be at times, commanding power, in regard to the spiritual. Thirdly, the tendency, growing out of the possession of power by imperfect human beings, is from the professed control only of temporal matters in the first instance, to the assertion of a right to interfere in the management of spiritual. He who holds the purse wields power, and they who manage the property of the church hold the purse.

2. There would be some flaw in this discussion of the subject, if it logically necessitated the denial of their rights to the non-communicating adherents of the Church; for we have admitted the principle, that there are natural and civil rights which should not be trespassed upon by ecclesiastical prerogative or requirement—the natural and civil right, for example, of the owners of property to control its management and use. It is incumbent on us, therefore, to show that the committal of church-property to diaconal administration would involve no infringement of these rights.

Either the property in question belongs entirely to the church, or it does not. If it does, the corporation which owns the property is numerically coincident with the body of the communicants. It is plain that the committal of its property to the management of deacons would involve no violation of its rights. For, first, the election of deacons would be the act of the body which, personally considered, is the same with the corporation,

and the choice could always be made with a regard to their qualifications to discharge financial trusts of so grave a character. And, secondly, there could not possibly result a sacrifice of rights by the subjects of Christ's kingdom in consequence of paying obedience to his requirements. Surely, if a corporation consist only of communicants, it should, as there would be no bar to its doing so, make the deacons the trustees to whom its property would be committed.

If the property does not belong to the church, but to a corporation composed partly of communicants and partly of non-communicants, then we may urge the consideration, that, for the reasons already mentioned, this state of things should be discontinued. The non-communicating members of such a corporation should pass over all their original rights in the property to the church, and consent that where it is practicable the corporation legally holding it be limited to the communicants. As this would be a purely voluntary act on their part, there could be no infringement of their rights. In favor of the adoption of such a course, we submit an additional consideration derived from the provision embodied in our new Book of Church Order, touching the electors of pastor. The non-communicating pew-holders, or subscribers to the support of the church, although contributors to the salary of the pastor, are excluded from the privilege of voting at his election. Their rights of property are in a certain sense implicated; but it was deemed proper that those rights should give way before the principle that only those who are spiritual are qualified to vote for a spiritual officer, and only those who are the professed subjects of Christ's rule are entitled to vote for an officer of his kingdom. The non-communicants who contribute to the support of a minister really pay for a religious benefit to themselves, their families, and the community of which they are members, and if they feel that they get not value received, if they are dissatisfied with their relations to the pastor and the church, they are not bound: they can remedy the difficulty by withdrawing. It is, of course, always optional with them to stay or go. So, reasoning from analogy, the non-communicants, who contribute towards the erection of a church-edifice, or the maintenance

of a church-organisation, are not by that fact invested with a right and title to vote in the election of those who manage the property of the church. What they contribute ought to be considered, not as retained under their control, but as given, freely given, to the church, and as therefore passing out of their hands and beyond their direction. In case of dissatisfaction, measures of redress are open to them, and failing those, they can get rid of the difficulty by withdrawing from connexion with the ministrations of the church. The circumstance that they have no voice in the election of deacons, need no more militate against their attendance at a church whose temporal goods are managed by those officers of Christ's appointment, than should the fact that they do not vote at the election of pastor prevent their cordial reception of his spiritual instructions.

It may be objected against this view, that the church has a civil side, and that acting in that relation, she may, in combination with those who are not church-members, elect officers and discharge functions, not strictly ecclesiastical. Here the great distinction to be noted is in regard to the *ends* contemplated. Where the ends are purely civil, such a combination is warranted in order to compass them, and secular agents may very properly be appointed with a view to their attainment; but where the ends are ecclesiastical, none but the church should act in reference to them, and none but ecclesiastical officers should undertake their accomplishment. In those cases, for example, in which a congregation as a collection of citizens or subjects of civil government seek redress at law, or by an appeal to the civil magistrate, for an infraction of those civil rights which they enjoy in common with their fellow-citizens, it acts in the capacity, not of a church, but of a civil society, seeking purely civil ends, and may appoint non-ecclesiastical agents and adopt civil and secular means to attain those ends. But where the ends are ecclesiastical, and the congregation acts in the capacity of a church, as in the case of property for religious purposes—buildings, lands, rents, stocks, etc., it ought to commit the attainment of those ends to ecclesiastical functionaries. This distinction, once clearly apprehended, removes many of the difficulties by which the investiture of the

deacons, as church-officers, with all the powers and responsibilities connected with the care of church-property is embarrassed.

It may be said that the very definition of the deacon's office is, that it is concerned about temporal objects and temporal ends, and that therefore the distinction vanishes between agents appointed to act in behalf of a congregation for civil purposes and the deacons who are elected for temporal. But, in the first place, civil and temporal are not convertible terms. That which is civil is temporal, it is true; but that which is temporal is not necessarily civil. And in the next place, only the proximate end of the deacon's office is temporal; the ultimate is ecclesiastical—ecclesiastical, we say, though not spiritual.

These reasons are, we conceive, sufficient to show that church property ought not to be held and managed by a corporation composed partly of communicants and partly of non-communicants; and that the latter should acquiesce in the administration of the property by the church through her own divinely ordained officers. It deserves, however, to be remarked, that where there is not a sufficient number of male members of a church to render this course practicable, necessity justifies the management of church property by secular persons who are interested in the support of gospel institutions.

But, if these reasons should be deemed inadequate, and there should be congregations, which, availing themselves of the terms of the constitution, choose to retain corporations partly spiritual and partly secular, we proceed to submit considerations which should induce such corporations not to elect secular trustees, or executive committees, but to elect the deacons of the church their trustees or executive committees.

(1.) These corporations might with great propriety show deference to the appointments of Him who is Head and Lawgiver of that society with which their members are pleased to connect themselves as professed worshippers and hearers of the gospel.

(2.) The communicants who are members of these corporations are bound to conform to the requirements of Christ. They cannot without guilt violate his appointments and substitute for the officers of his ordination others created by themselves. Conse-

quently, against the alleged rights of the non-communicating property holders must be offsetted the duties of those who are communicants; and as the rights may be waived while the duties cannot, the rights of the non-communicants ought to yield to the obligations of the communicants. If this were done, as equity requires, the care of church property would always, where practicable, be lodged in the hands of the deacons. They would be elected its trustees.

(3.) The contribution of their means for ecclesiastical purposes, or the holding of ecclesiastical property by non-communicants, is not with a view to the reaping of pecuniary profit, but to secure moral and religious advantages to themselves and their families, which can only be obtained in connexion with the ordinances of the church. And, looking at the case from this point of view, we remark:

In the first place, the risk of temporal loss cannot ordinarily be any greater in consequence of committing the property to the care of church officers who may not only be sued at law, but are directly responsible to ecclesiastical authority for the manner in which they discharge their trusts.

In the second place, no gain but one purely religious being contemplated in the holding of church property by non-communicants, that end cannot be defeated by intrusting it the care of ecclesiastical officers.

But, in the third place, it is more probable, on the other hand, that religious benefit will be secured by connexion with a church which pays a strict obedience to the laws of Christ, and refuses to substitute officers of man's creation for those of his appointment. The purer the church, the greater the advantages to accrue from sustaining it.

(4.) The transference to other hands of duties which belong properly to the deacons has generally led to their merely nominal existence, if not to their obliteration, "In most Presbyterian denominations throughout Great Britain, Ireland, and America," says Dr. David King, in his able work on Presbyterian Church Government, "such deacons are generally dispensed with, and the charge of ecclesiastical funds is divided between elders and managers, or allied agencies." This statement has a sting in

it to the heart that honors the laws and appointments of Christ. Ought we not to see to it that any of our own churches which may have failed to elect deacons, should proceed, if it be possible, to supply the defect, and that the temporalities of the Church be committed to the hands of Christ's appointed officers? When will we conform our church order to the pattern showed us in the New Testament? It is a solemn remark which Willson makes in his Essay, that the deacon and the trustee have never for any considerable time coexisted in any denomination of Christians. Which, then, will we retain?

Hitherto we have spoken on the supposition that the communicants of a church, or the communicants and non-communicating supporters of a church, constitute the body corporate for the legal holding of church property. But the deacons themselves may be made the corporate body, as Dr. Samuel Miller, of Princeton, suggests. We will not undertake to decide between the incorporation of the communicants with the deacons as trustees on the one hand, and the incorporation of the deacons on the other. What we urge is that one or the other of these two plans be adopted, to the exclusion of a mixed corporation partly spiritual and partly secular; or, failing that, that a mixed corporation should elect the deacons as their trustees.

If the deacons be made trustees, and the management of church property be committed to their hands, it deserves to be remarked that the checks against a maladministration of it would be more ample than upon any other scheme. For, in addition to their legal responsibility, the deacons could be prosecuted for official delinquency before the bar of the Session.

It is proper to observe that in case the deacons are made the trustees of a corporation, they would lie under an obligation to present to that body periodical fiscal accounts, and reports of their proceedings in reference to the property committed to them. If they are themselves constituted the body corporate, they would have to report their proceedings and render their accounts to the church, in its congregational capacity, as holder of the property under their care.*

*It gives us pleasure to say that there is a church in this Synod—

THIRDLY. We propose briefly to consider the functions of the deacon as terminating on collections for congregational purposes and for the temporal support of the benevolent enterprises and the institutions of the Church.

By collections for congregational purposes, we mean all collections made for the purpose of meeting the necessities of the particular church in which they are lifted, apart from those for the relief of the poor—those, for example, for salaries of the minister and sexton, and for current expenses. By collections for the temporal support of the benevolent enterprises and the institutions of the Church, we intend to designate those made both for the maintenance of the benevolent schemes of particular churches such as missionary Sabbath-schools and congregations, and asylums for the poor; and for the benevolent schemes and institutions of the Church at large—such as Home and Foreign Missions, education of needy candidates for the ministry, publication of religious literature, support of invalid ministers and the indigent families of deceased ministers, theological seminaries, and the like.

The legitimacy of employing the deacon in the discharge of secular ecclesiastical functions in addition to his care of the poor, has already been considered under the head of the management of church property. The general conclusion there reached covers the specific case in hand. If the deacon's office is legitimately employed in relation to all the temporal affairs of the Church, it is of course legitimately employed in relation to the raising of collections for congregational and benevolent purposes. There is no need, therefore, to discuss the question in the special aspect of it before us. It is, however, worthy of remark, as something curious, that those who objected to the extension of the deacon's functions to the care of church property, on the ground that he was appointed to attend to the relief of the poor,

that of Abbeville—in which, by a Constitution drafted by that able lawyer, our late lamented brother, Col. Thomas C. Perrin, the body of communicants is the corporation, and the deacons the trustees. It is to be hoped that all our churches will, where it is practicable, adopt this plan.

did not appear to see that in sanctioning his employment in raising all the collections of the Church, they were inconsistent with themselves, and had, indeed, abandoned the ground on which they stood. If the deacon was by virtue of his appointment restricted to the care of the poor, the church had no right to use his services in making collections for other purposes. But the practice of our Church has long since settled that question as a practical one. Deacons are universally employed among us to take up collections for all purposes. We are gratified, too, in being able now to say, that our Constitution also settles the question and confirms our practice. It says, Form of Government, Chap. II., Sec. 4., Art. IV.: "To the deacons belongs the administration of the offerings for the poor, and other pious uses;" and in Chap. IV., Sec. 4, Art. II.: "The duties of this office especially relate to the care of the poor and to the collection and distribution of the offerings of the people for pious uses." There can, therefore, no longer be any doubt that the deacons are our constitutional agents for making collections for all purposes.

1. We would call attention to the *negative* bearing upon our practice of this declaration of the Form of Government in regard to the duties of deacons. It is admitted that the Constitution binds us because, as we believe, it represents the law of Christ as enounced in the New Testament Scriptures. The duties, consequently, which the Constitution assigns to deacons are, we believe, those which the law of Christ imposes upon them. But these duties are obligatory upon them as a distinct class. They are distinctive of, and peculiar to, that class. They can, therefore, be the duties of no other class, on the supposition that the one exists to which they are authoritatively attached. That is to say, if there are deacons in a church, no other officer is called or empowered, under ordinary circumstances, to discharge their peculiar functions. The minister and the ruling elder are not entitled to perform them. They have their own appropriate duties assigned them by divine authority. So have the deacons. It would, therefore, be illegitimate, in a regular condition of the church in which deacons have their place, for the minister and elder to leave their own functions in order to discharge those

of the deacons. Every one should stand in his own lot and perform the duties which belong to it. These views must hold good, unless it can be proved that the higher office includes the lower, so that while it is not competent for the lesser officer to discharge the functions of the greater, the greater may perform those of the lesser. We can conceive no other ground upon which it can be urged that the minister and elder may do the work of the deacon, while the deacon is limited strictly to his own. In a previous part of this discussion, we endeavored to show that this doctrine of the inclusion of the lower office in the higher, in a regular condition of the Church, cannot be sustained by an appeal to Scripture, or to the consent of the Church, or to rational considerations. But if it be untenable, it remains that the peculiar duties of the diaconate cannot be transferred to other church officers, or to special agents. This we conceive to be the constitutional and scriptural view; and if so, it needs no reinforcement from human arguments. When the Lord speaks, let all the earth keep silence. But the importance of our compliance with the divine will in the premises, may be evinced by a few considerations.

In the first place, it is obvious that where the principle of a division of labor can be employed, so that different functions may be assigned to different laborers, and so that by virtue of this distribution experts are thrown together for the accomplishment of the ends to which they are peculiarly adapted, and so, moreover, that a facility for performing certain kinds of work is increased by an habitual and exclusive devotion to it of a particular class, greater efficiency would be attained by a working organisation, and higher results in every way would be reached, than by jumbling officers together, and, to use a homely but forcible aphorism, making the peculiar function of one class attach to all, so that "what is everybody's business becomes nobody's."

In the second place, the principle of responsibility lies across the path of this doctrine, that other officers or agents may discharge the functions of deacons. If the deacon is made to feel that no one but himself can perform duties which belong to him alone, his sense of responsibility, if he be a true man, will operate

in full force ; but if his functions may be discharged by others, his responsibility is divided, it is shared with others, and his sense of it must be proportionably decreased. And it will equally follow that those who depart from their own peculiar vocation to act as the deacon's substitutes, cannot have that powerful conviction of accountability which is one of the surest guarantees of efficiency. No officer can profoundly feel responsibility for functions to which he is conscious that he was never ordained, and which he never bound himself, by the vows of ordination, to fulfil. Throw his full responsibilities upon the deacon alone, and he will be sure to rise under them. Divide them with others, and you dwarf him.

In the third place, we may derive instruction in this matter from the analogous case in the past of a substitution of special agencies for pastoral ministrations, in the effort to advance the benevolent enterprises of the Church. Time was when it was deemed necessary for paid agents to circulate among the churches in order to stimulate them to the duty of beneficence. The Church had the grace to discard that system, and the results have been gratifying. We are slow to learn. Why should we not refuse to thrust out the deacon from the work to which he is called, as well as the pastor and the elders from theirs? When we shall thoroughly trust and use the deacon, if ever we shall, we will find that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

2. Let us next look at the *positive* bearing upon our practice of the constitutional requirement, that the deacons shall raise and distribute all collections for pious uses. There are two modes of making collections: first, from congregations during the services of the sanctuary, and as an element of public worship; secondly, from individuals by special application, apart from the public services of the Church. What the function of the deacons is in regard to the first of these methods of collecting, it is not necessary to inquire. Our practice is sufficiently settled to render discussion needless. But the same is not true in reference to the second mode of collecting—by special application to individuals. Here, we think, our practice is defective, and we desire

to indicate a way in which the defect may be remedied. We are unable to see why the deacons should not be as exclusively employed to make one sort of collections as another. They ought not, as has been shown, to be thrust aside, and in our practice, they are not thrust aside, by other agents, in making the public collections in the house of the Lord. Why should not the deacon discharge his own duties also, in respect to the collections made from individuals? We see no real ground of difference between the two cases, and therefore think that they ought practically to be brought into unity. Now we lay down the proposition, that the deacons are congregational agents for making collections not only for congregational purposes, but for general benevolent objects, and that this holds good in relation to collections from individuals in behalf of those general objects. Let us illustrate this position by reference to a particular case. We will suppose that a theological seminary, under the care of our Church, is in need of pecuniary help. We will suppose also that every Presbytery, within the scope of country from which the institution might legitimately expect to derive its support, recommends or enjoins the Sessions of its churches to present the case, as an extraordinary one lying outside of their regular schedules of causes, to individuals for their contributions. Now let the deacons of each church, all or some of them, be directed by the Sessions thoroughly to canvass the congregations, and the communities, so far as accessible, in which the churches exist, for the purpose of securing contributions to the support of the institution,—that would be an instance which would elucidate our meaning. Ascend from the particular to the general, and you have the principle for which we are contending in its application to general objects of benevolence, viz., that when it is sought to bring them before individuals for their contributions, they should be intrusted for that purpose to the hands of deacons as officers appointed by Christ with reference to all the financial necessities of his Church. We strongly urge the adoption of this course.

We would not be understood as advocating the exclusion of other agencies, contemplating the attainment of the same end, provided they be confined to their own appropriate spheres.

There is need, in regard to such objects, of instruction, exposition, and appeal. The educated mind, the trained speaker, are demanded for the discharge of such offices. The apostles and their fellow-ministers stirred up the churches to contribute to the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem; but the apostles did not make collections either from churches or individuals. We are not called upon to discuss the question whether such a preliminary office should be discharged by pastors in their regular ministrations, or whether it might not be more appropriately assigned to special agents, particularly under extraordinary circumstances, as, for example, when an endowment is sought for an institution. All that we strive for, is, that the collections should be made by deacons, with that minute, thorough-going canvassing of a congregation and community which only such a method could possibly compass. Whatever a single individual might or might not accomplish, let this be done, and there is hardly a person within the limits of our congregations who might not be approached, and have the opportunity presented to him of giving his contribution. Here, then, we have Presbyteries approving and enjoining, pastors instructing and exhorting—perhaps special agents adding their stirring appeals—Sessions ordering the collections, and the deacons making them. The system seems perfect. It may, it will, in consequence of human imperfection, prove practically defective; but we verily believe it to be the best which can be conceived, and for the simple reason that it is God's system. Duty and policy alike urge us to its complete adoption.

FOURTHLY. This discussion of the scope of the deacon's functions will be concluded with some remarks upon the question, whether they terminate upon the Lord's Table.

It is by some contended that the office of deacon includes the service of three tables: the table of the poor, the table of the minister, and the table of the Lord. We confess our inability to perceive why the Lord's table should be embraced in this classification, except that the mere name, *table-service*, is made generic, including under it the specific service of every sort of table. There is really no analogy between the Lord's Table and the other tables, which would lead to its being reduced to unity with

them as falling to the care of the deacon. It would properly belong to that officer to provide the table itself, and then, as occasion requires, to provide also the elements to be placed upon it; for the reason that the moneys of the church are committed to his hands, and whatever in the preparation for the sacrament involves expense, would naturally fall to his charge. But this having been done, what else remains which would belong distinctively to his office? It is admitted that the administration of the sacred ordinance is restricted to the minister of the word, by reason of the analogy between the teaching function of the sacrament and that of preaching. As, moreover, the administration of the ordinance contemplates spiritual ends, the deacon as a temporal officer is debarred from it. The only remaining thing to be done is the actual transmission—the handing—of the elements to the communicants. Now, can it be shown that the manual transmission of the bread and wine from the officiating minister to the recipients pertains so peculiarly to the deacon's office that others are precluded from undertaking it? We think not, for the following reasons:

1. The only place in Scripture, so far as we know, which is supposed to warrant the threefold classification we have mentioned is that in the sixth chapter of the Acts, recording the arguments used by the Apostles for the election of the seven: "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." But it is evident that the Apostles could only have meant the tables from which the bodily wants of the poor were supplied, and those on which the money or the goods of the church were laid—the provision tables and the money tables. Otherwise they must be understood as having transferred the sacramental table with the others to the sole care of the deacons, and as having asserted that it was an unreasonable thing for them, and by parity of reason, for all ministers of the word, to serve the Lord's Table. The argument is invalid, from the fact that it proves too much.

2. We do not know of any other passage of Scripture from which a good and necessary inference can be derived, making it the peculiar duty of deacons to distribute the sacramental ele-

ments. The question would be settled, could such an inference be indicated. In its absence, we are left to be guided by the nature of the case, and by the analogy of the deacon's office. Now the end contemplated in the distribution of the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper is not the nourishment or refreshment of the body; and as the function of the deacon terminates on the body, there would seem to be no special reason why he should, to the exclusion of others, circulate the elements. This function does not come under the head either of the care of the poor, or of the care of moneys, or of the care of property; and these exhaust the scope of the deacon's duties, unless some scriptural evidence exists for another head—the service of the Lord's Table.

3. It is often the case that the communicants themselves in part transmit the elements from one to another. This is as much a distribution of them as the deacon may be supposed to perform; and if it belongs to the deacon alone to distribute them, the passage of them by the hands of the recipients would be an unwarrantable intrusion upon the diaconal office. But could it, on scriptural grounds, be arrested for that reason? In all probability, if we are at liberty to form an inferential judgment in the matter, this was what was actually done in apostolic times. It is almost, if not entirely, impossible to see how the Corinthian communicants could have become drunken at the Lord's Supper, if Paul had instructed the church that the deacons ought to distribute the elements.

4. The opinions and practice of the Church have been too uncertain and conflicting to furnish any satisfactory argument from ecclesiastical authority and precedent in favor of charging the deacon alone with the duty of distributing the elements at the Supper. We furnish specimens of this difference, which are sufficient to illustrate our position:

Justin Martyr, the early father, in a passage in his *Second Apology*, which is often quoted, says that in his time the deacons distributed the sacramental elements to the people.

Bingham, after citing this passage of Justin Martyr, proceeds to say:

“The author of the *Constitutions* likewise, describing the manner of the

ancient service, divides the whole action between the bishop and the deacon; appointing the bishop to deliver the bread to every communicant singly, saying, 'The body of Christ!' and the deacon in like manner to deliver the cup, saying, 'The blood of Christ, the cup of life!' This the author under the name of St. Austin calls the proper office of the deacons' order. Yet it was not so proper to their order, but that they were to depend on the will and license of the bishops and presbyters, if they were present; as is expressly provided in some of the ancient Councils, which forbid the deacon to give the Eucharist in the presence of a presbyter, except necessity require, and he have his leave to do it."*

Steuart of Pardovan says:

"They [the deacons] may be employed to provide the elements. to carry them, and serve the communicants at the Lord's table."†

As an offset to the testimony of Justin Martyr, that of Origen is as often quoted to the effect that "the deacons preside over the money-tables of the church."

Rufinus said that when there was no presbyter present the deacons might distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper.

Aymon, in his Acts of the National Synods of the Reformed Churches of France, gives this decision of the National Synod at Lyons, 1563:

"As to the question which has been referred to the Brethren of Geneva, whether the pastors only should distribute the bread and the wine to the people at the table of the Lord, they have answered: That it would be very well if they would do it, and that they would do it at all times; but the thing appearing impracticable at present, and still more so for the future, if God should multiply the number of believers, that it would not be unsuitable for the deacons and elders, as the arms and hands of the ministers, to distribute the sacramental elements, after their consecration, to the people who are too far from the minister to be reached by him."‡

The same author gives the following decision of the National Synod at Vertueil:

"Our brethren having proposed a doubt, to wit, whether any person except the minister of the gospel may deliver the cup to the people in the sacrament—the Synod, after duly weighing the reasons on both sides of the question, do decide, That the fourteenth article decreed by the

**Antiquities*. Vol. I., p. 253. †*Collections*, p. 31.

‡*Synodes Nationaux des Eglises Réformées de France*, Tom. I., p. 57.

Council of Lyons should remain in force, namely, that none other than the minister, if possible, should deliver the cup."†

He furnishes also this decision of the National Synod at Privas:

"This body . . . confirms the judgment rendered by the National Synod of St. Maixent, which shows that the elders and deacons, in case of necessity, may distribute the cup, but without speaking."*

It seems exceedingly probable that in the early Church the custom of the distribution of the sacramental elements by deacons originated in the hypothesis, which very soon began to prevail, that the diaconal office subordinately involved the preaching function, and that the deacon ought to be, in a peculiar sense, an assistant of the bishop, as the presiding officer of the presbyterial college came to be exclusively called. It is easy to see how, under the influence of such a view of the diaconate, the deacon was employed to assist "the bishop" in the administration of the Supper. Sometimes, as we have heard Bingham saying, the bishop distributed the bread and the deacon the cup. This looks very much like the recognition of a teaching prerogative as belonging to the deacon, grounding his participation with the bishop in the dispensation of the elements.

While, therefore, we cannot perceive that either Scripture, or the analogy of the deacon's office, or the consentient practice of the true Church, would lead us to conclude that it is a distinctive duty of the deacon to distribute the elements at the administration of the Lord's Supper, neither do we see any just reason why he may not assist the minister in the manual circulation of them; provided, that function is not considered as proper to him by virtue of his containing in himself the germ of the preaching office. For, it is not, so far as we know, made obligatory on any other officer than the minister, strictly speaking, to distribute the elements—that is, to give them from the table to the people; and we see no reason why elders and deacons may not, after the sacramental action of distribution has been done by the minister, unite in merely passing the elements about among the communicants without the use of any words; or why, in the absence of elders and deacons from a church, some reputable private mem-

**Ibid.*, p. 74. †*Ibid.*, p. 415.

ber may not be called upon to render this service of love to his fellow-communicants. Where there is no male member of a church, the transmission, as well as the distribution, in the first instance from the table, would devolve on the officiating minister, as a servant of the Church for Jesus' sake. Lest, therefore, it should be regarded as peculiarly imperative upon either the elders or the deacons to discharge this service, we would express the judgment, that, in the ordinary practice of our churches, both classes of officers should take part in its performance; for it does not distinctively appertain to the elder any more than to the deacon. Decency, order, and convenience, make it expedient that some particular persons should be charged with the circulation of the elements among the communicants; and the church-officers, without distinction, would, we think, most appropriately be called upon to assist the minister in putting the elements into the hands of all the recipients, especially those remote from him. We concur in the opinion, already cited, of the "Brethren of Geneva"—and Calvin was alive when that judgment was rendered*—that, the distribution of the sacramental elements properly belongs to the minister; but that after he has distributed them from the table, the mere manual transmission—the handing—of them among the communicants should be jointly performed by the elders and deacons.

*This judgment was adopted by the National Synod of Lyons in 1563, and Calvin died in 1564.

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ARTICLE I.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE UNIVERSALLY CONFESSED.*

The pure and unsullied righteousness of God lies at the foundation of all right conceptions of his nature, his word, and his works. God is himself absolute moral perfection. Whatever he speaks is absolute truth; whatever he does is absolute righteousness. It must be so. The God who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom and power, must be so no less in his holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. You can more reasonably deny the existence of God altogether, than deny that. An infinite devil is a moral impossibility; our reason revolts at it, no less than our conscience. The heathen, with all their devil-worship, have never imagined, much less believed in, such a monster. The advocates of Dualism never held to such an absurdity; for even in their view, the eternal principle of evil is eternally limited and checked by the eternal principle of good. Consciously or unconsciously, the mind refuses to ascribe infinite attributes to a being even tainted with moral imperfection. Jupiter with all his magnificence

*Some peculiarities of this paper render it proper to state that it embodies the substance of a sermon preached before the late Synod of South Carolina, which has been reduced to writing and prepared for publication in this form, at the particular request of one of the Editors of this REVIEW.

ARTICLE II.

THE DIACONATE.*

III. Thirdly, we will consider the sphere of the deacon's operations. In regard to the question, whether the functions of a deacon are confined to the limits of the congregation of which he is an officer, opposite opinions have been maintained. We propose, first, to discuss this question: and, secondly, to indicate the practical consequences which flow from the conclusion which we hope to establish.

FIRST. We will endeavor to show that the sphere of the deacon's operations is not confined to the limits of the particular church of which he is an officer, but may, at the call of the higher courts, embrace the temporal interests of the Church at large.

1. The first class of arguments in support of this view will be derived immediately from the Scriptures.

(1.) It is plain, from the record in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Church at Jerusalem had a common fund, from which distribution was daily made according to the necessity of every individual. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." (Chap. ii. 44, 45.) "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. . . . Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Chap. iv. 32, 34, 35.)

It is also evident, from the record in Acts, that the body of believers in Jerusalem soon became so numerous as to render separate congregations necessary for purposes of worship and instruction. Upon the occasion of Paul's last visit to that city,

*Report presented to the Synod of South Carolina November, 1880.

he was informed by James and the elders that there were many thousands—in the original, many myriads—of Jews who believed. Now, either these congregations were distinct organisations, or they were not. If they were, as there were deacons who distributed the common fund, they must have sustained a catholic relation to as many particular churches as existed. If they were not, it must still be admitted that the deacons who distributed the common fund were not officers confined in the discharge of their functions to the limits of particular congregations. They held a common relation to all the congregations, and, as representing the general interest, administered the fund for the benefit of all. The inference is plain. Our Church is divided into particular congregations. She has common funds which are administered for the good of the Church at large. If, therefore, she should follow apostolic example, and appoint deacons to distribute them, they would, of necessity, act outside of the limits of particular congregations. Even if the extreme, and, as we have previously endeavored to show, unscriptural ground should be taken, that deacons are confined to the administration of funds for the relief of the poor, this conclusion would not be invalidated. For, we have common funds which contemplate the relief of the poor, the invalid fund, for example, and the education fund, for the assistance of needy candidates for the ministry. And, as according to the view under consideration, deacons are legitimately assigned to the distribution of every poor fund, and these, though common, are poor funds, deacons may properly be constituted their distributors, and must, of necessity, transcend in the discharge of such functions the sphere of the particular congregations of which they are officers. In short, deacons, in the church at Jerusalem, by the appointment of the apostles, were distributors of a common fund, and were, therefore, common distributors, sustaining a catholic relation to distinct congregations. We have, therefore, apostolic authority for the appointment of deacons to act with reference to the general interests of the Church.

(2.) The same conclusion will be reached by considering the relation which the deacons who administered the common fund

sustained to the apostolic college. It will be admitted that the apostles held a catholic relation to the Church as a whole. Now let us suppose that they had yielded to the solicitation that they would personally superintend and direct the work of daily distribution. It is obvious that they would, in that case, as distributors of common provisions, in that capacity, have also sustained a catholic relation to the Church. But they declined to discharge this office, and having counselled the people to elect deacons, appointed them to perform it. The deacons, consequently, as distributors of the common fund, held precisely the catholic relation to the whole Church which the apostles would have sustained had they consented to perform this diaconal function. Take another view of the matter. The apostles confessedly bore a catholic relation to the whole Church. But the deacons, who distributed the common fund, acted under the supervision and control of the apostles. It follows, that as distributors they must have sustained a relation to the Church as general as was that of the apostles in their capacity as teachers and rulers. It is out of the question that the superintendence of the apostles was exercised within the several limits of particular congregations. The deacons who served the tables under the direction of the apostles must, therefore, have sustained catholic relations to the Church.

(3.) The employment of deacons in connexion with the temporal interests of the Church in general is legitimated and enforced by the principle enounced by the apostles in refusing to take charge of the daily distribution—namely, the unreasonableness of commingling incompatible functions. “It is not reason,” they declared, “that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.” It is admitted by Presbyterians, that this principle is one which was not confined in its application to the case of the apostles, but extends to that of all ministers of the word. A competent discharge of their peculiar duties excludes their attention to diaconal business. But, as we have previously shown in these discussions, the same principle holds in relation to ruling elders simply. They have special functions, the thorough-going performance of which debars their devotion to the duties incumbent upon another order of officers. The presbyter cannot, in

an ordinary and regular condition of the church, assume the official obligations of the deacon without unreasonably commingling incompatible functions. It ought to be sufficient to those who obey the authority of the divine word, and deny to the church any discretionary power not guaranteed by that word, to know that the apostles, proceeding upon this principle, did not direct the multitude of believers to elect elders for the purpose of adequately administering the daily alms, but to choose deacons for the attainment of that end.

Assuming, then, that the Scriptures pronounce unreasonable the union of inconsistent functions in the same officer, we must conclude that it is alike unreasonable and unscriptural that either the minister of the word or the ruling elder should, in ordinary circumstances, discharge the duties of the deacon. In all cases in which the temporal business of the Church is to be attended to, and deacons are accessible, they are the officers to whom it ought to be intrusted. Let us now apply this principle to our own church operations. For to confess a principle to be scriptural and to fail to apply it, involves no tonly inconsistency, but unfaithfulness to God. We have already mentioned the fact that we have general funds which are administered without specific relation to congregational limits, business of a financial character to be done, which is connected with the general interests of the Church and with the evangelisation of the world. The distribution of these funds, the management of this business, upon the principle we have signalised, demand the deacon. Is it not, then, perfectly obvious that the deacon is not confined, in the discharge of his functions, to the sphere of the particular congregation? Tie him to it, and you force upon the Church the practical necessity of violating the principle, upon which the apostles acted, of refusing to commingle incompatible functions. Admit that the General Assembly, or Synods, or Presbyteries, may hold property or perform temporal functions, and you admit the necessity of employing the deacon beyond congregational limits. It is conceded, both by our theory and our practice, that ministers of the word and ruling elders ought not to displace the deacon in the discharge of temporal functions within

those limits. The same principle which holds within the congregational sphere must hold without it; otherwise inconsistency emerges, and Scripture authority is resisted. If temporal business of a congregational nature ought to be committed to deacons, so ought the same sort of business connected with the Church at large. The principle is the same.

This argument may be still more impressively exhibited by presenting it as one from the less to the greater. If ministers and elders ought not to be diverted from their spiritual duties by attention to the temporal business of a single congregation, much more ought they not to be turned aside from them by devotion to the secular interests of the whole Church. The Executive Committees of our General Assembly, for instance, are each of them scarcely larger than some of the sessions of particular churches. The spiritual and ecclesiastical business which they have to perform is confessedly urgent, difficult, exhausting. How, then, can they, without being unduly diverted from it, discharge the temporal functions connected with the management and disbursement of the funds of the whole Church which are appropriated to general ends? The argument is irresistible: a session ought not to be distracted by attention to the secular business of a single congregation; much more ought not a committee, no larger than a session, to be embarrassed by devotion to the temporal interests of the whole Church. Is it not manifest that the diaconal function is a necessity beyond the sphere of particular congregations?

So much for the direct argument from Scripture for the employment of deacons beyond the bounds of the particular churches of which they are officers.

2. We next submit considerations in favor of this position derived from the analogy of the Presbyterian system.

(1.) If we contemplate the fundamental principle of the unity of the Church, we shall see that it is legitimate to employ diaconal functions outside of the limits of particular congregations.

Besides the spiritual unity of the whole body of the elect, springing from a common relation to Christ the Head, and a common possession of the Holy Spirit as the principle of life, we

hold, as Presbyterians, that the Church is externally one. All who profess the true religion, together with their children, constitute the one catholic visible Church on earth. Within the circle of this one great visible institute, we also hold to the legitimacy of a denominational unity, grounded in a distinctive creed, and certain definite principles of church order. Our own Church is one body, not as made up of an aggregation of independent units, but as an organic whole of which particular churches are special organs. The individual churches are members of one body, parts of one great organism; and taken together they are not a collection of churches—they are a Church. If this be true—and no Presbyterian will dispute it—it follows that the constituent elements of each particular church are constituent elements of the whole Church. The officers and members of the particular church are officers and members of the whole Church. True, they sustain a special relation to the particular church to which they are attached, but it is also true, that, through it, they sustain a general relation to the whole Church of which it is an integral element. Probably no one would deny that this holds in reference to the members. The members of this church, in whose edifice we are sitting, are certainly members of the Southern Presbyterian Church. The minister of the word who officiates here is a minister of that Church. The ruling elders are ruling elders of the same. How, then, can the deacons be excluded from the scope of this principle? They cannot. The deacons of this particular church are deacons of our Church as a whole. Why, then, may they not be employed in connexion with its general interests? It behoves those who contend that they cannot, to show that what is true of the other officers of a particular church is not true of the deacons; that they are excepted from the influence of the principle of organic unity, which is admitted to be fundamental to our system.

In answer to this demand, it may be said that the principle of external organic unity is but the principle of representation, that it is this which constitutes the basis of our system of correlated courts, and that as presbyters are representatives they necessarily enter as factors into the whole system, and discharge

functions which bear a catholic relation to the general interests of the Church. But deacons are not representatives. There is no series of diaconal courts. Their case, therefore, is peculiar, as restricted to the particular churches to which they are attached. To this we reply, that by virtue of the action of this very principle of representation, all the interests of the Church expand beyond the limits of particular congregations. And this is true not only of spiritual but temporal interests. Presbyteries, Synods, and Assemblies, representing interests more or less extensive, necessarily have functions of a temporal nature to discharge, business of a secular character to which attention must be given. The temporal duties which accompany the representative principle in its expansion create a demand for the deacon. Wherever the presbyter goes, the deacon must go with him. For we have seen that it is unreasonable, and, as the apostles pronounced it unreasonable, it is unscriptural, for the presbyter to perform the duties of the deacon. Wherever, therefore, in the practical reach of the representative principle, temporal interests are encountered, there diaconal functions become a necessity. "Out of the eater comes forth meat." The objection, founded on the principle of representation, against the extension of the deacon's functions beyond the sphere of particular congregations, furnishes a conclusive reason in favor of that which it is designed to disprove.

(2.) But while we admit and maintain that the representative principle is that in which the external organic unity of the Church is grounded, so far as its polity is concerned, we hold, at the same time, that there are other aspects of ecclesiastical unity which justify and require the employment of deacons in relation to interests wider than those of particular congregations.

In the first place, there is the unity of temporal interests, a unity springing from the common possession of temporal goods, and the common administration of ecclesiastical funds. Representation holds not only strictly and technically in regard to rule over persons and over ecclesiastical things, so far as personal rights and duties are involved, but also in a looser sense, in relation to the care of things. The deacon represents the particular

church in reference to its temporal, as the presbyter represents it in reference to its spiritual, interests. But the Church is one in all its interests, both temporal and spiritual. And as the elder represents both the spiritual interests of the particular church, and of the Church at large, the deacon who immediately represents the particular church with respect to its temporal interests, also represents the whole Church with respect to the same sort of interests.

In the second place, there is the unity arising from the common need of diaconal service. The deacon, as his name imports, is emphatically a servant of the church. Now the Church, as a whole, needs service in the temporal sphere. There is not, for example, an executive committee of the General Assembly which has not a large amount of money intrusted to its care, that not only requires to be appropriated according to the wisdom of the presbyter, but to be received, kept, and disbursed by the deacon, if we would conform our whole practice to scriptural principles. But the service, which would thus be rendered to the Church in its organic capacity, would be performed in behalf of all the particular congregations which compose it. The Church, as one, needs diaconal service. Consequently the minister of that service cannot be legitimately confined to the sphere of a particular congregation. In a word, the deacon, like the minister and the ruling elder, is a servant of the whole Church, and if in that capacity she requires his service, as it is plain she does, that service cannot be refused.

In the third place, there is the unity of temporal want and suffering. If, in the expansion of the Presbyterian system, the Church were relieved of temporal necessities beyond the limits of particular congregations, there would be no need of the offices of the deacon beyond those limits. But the Church, in its development into Presbyteries, Synods, and Assembly, is pressed by temporal necessities. The deacon, as temporal officer, is, therefore, a necessity to the Church as a whole. As the ground of his office, viz., temporal need, exists in the Church as a whole, the deacon has functions to discharge in relation to her in that capacity. Wherever in the Church, either within or with-

out the limits of particular congregations, there is temporal need to be supplied, there the services of the deacon not only may be, but ought to be, invoked.

These considerations, derived from principles fundamental to the Presbyterian system, go to show that the sphere of the deacon's operations is not bounded by the limits of the particular church which elected him to office, but may be legitimately extended so as to embrace the temporal interests of the Church at large.

3. We present a few arguments, based both upon the actual practice of our Church, and upon her formal declaration as to a mode of action capable of being reduced to practice.

(1.) It is a matter of common occurrence that the deacon, in making collections during the public services of the Lord's house on the Sabbath, goes outside of the limits of the particular church to which he is attached. He collects money from persons who are members of other particular Presbyterian churches, from persons belonging to other denominations, and from persons connected with no denomination. This is an instance, occurring statedly, in which, so far as the function of collecting is concerned, the sphere of the deacons extends beyond the bounds of a particular church. It will probably be urged in answer to this consideration that, although it be true that in discharging the function of collecting he goes outside of the limits of the particular church, he acts on its behalf, and in his special relation to it as its officer. It is the particular church which makes the collections through him as its agent. To this we rejoin: In the first place, many of the collections thus made do not terminate on congregational objects, but on those contemplated by the Church's general schemes of benevolence. They are, in one sense, made in behalf of the particular church, as they express its worship and lead to the cultivation of its graces; but, in another sense, they are not made in its interest, since the end upon which they terminate is the benefit of the Church at large, or the evangelisation of the Christless world. They are, in a special relation, means of grace; but, in a general relation, material contributions to the advancement of extra-congregational objects. They are, therefore, not simply made in behalf of a

particular church. In this case the deacon acts not merely for a particular church, but also for the Church as a whole.

In the second place, the particular church, in directing that collections be made in behalf of the general objects of benevolence, acts in compliance with the authority of the Supreme Court representing the whole Church, and is, therefore, in a sense, its agent. The deacon, consequently, though in making these collections he is immediately the agent of a particular church, is, at the same time mediately through that church the agent of the whole Church. In a special relation, he is an officer of a particular church; in a general relation, an officer of the whole Church.

These considerations are sufficient to rebut the objection to our view that in making collections for general objects the deacon transcends mere congregational limits. What has been said holds also of collections for general objects made by the deacon in the way of private application to individuals.

(2.) That the deacon is not merely a local officer, confined to a particular congregation, is evinced by the fact that, when his membership is transferred from one particular church to another, he is not re-ordained. The practice of the Church, in this respect, shows her doctrine to be, that, besides his special relation to the particular church which elected him, the deacon sustains a catholic relation to the Church at large. While *in transitu* he is still a deacon. His office, like that of the ruling elder, goes with him from church to church.

(3.) Our own Church has distinctly assumed the principle that deacons are not confined in the discharge of their functions to the sphere of a particular church; and has deliberately and formally expressed its judgment that they may act in connexion with Executive Committees appointed by the higher courts. The constitution of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions which was, after mature deliberation, adopted by its first General Assembly, held in the city of Augusta, in 1861, contains the following article: "This Committee shall be known as the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. It shall consist

of a Secretary, who shall be styled the Secretary of Foreign Missions, and who shall be the Committee's organ of communication with the Assembly and with all portions of the work intrusted to this Committee, a Treasurer, and nine other members, three of whom at least shall be ruling elders or deacons or private members of the Church, all appointed annually by the General Assembly, and shall be directly amenable to it for the faithful and efficient discharge of the duties entrusted to its care. Vacancies occurring *ad interim*, it shall fill, if necessary."*

The same Assembly adopted the following resolution: "*Resolved*, That the principles of organisation involved in the establishment of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, be considered as applying to all the Executive Committees to be appointed."† Accordingly, we find not only that provision is made, in the constitution of the Committee of Foreign Missions, for the possible appointment of deacons as members of that committee, but that the same provision is made in the respective constitutions of the Committees of Domestic Missions, Education, and Publication.‡

A question may, we think, be legitimately raised in regard to the propriety of this action, so far as it implies the commingling of presbyters, deacons, and private members of the Church in the same committees. In our judgment, the difficulties lying in the way of the realisation of such a scheme are formidable, if not insuperable. It is not our intention, however, just at this point, to discuss that question. What is now designed is to call attention to the fact that our Church, from its very inception as a separate organisation, has been committed to the position that deacons may, at the call of the higher courts, be employed beyond congregational limits, and that they may be appointed as committee-men by the General Assembly, and, by parity of reason, may be appointed to act in the same capacity by the other courts of the Church. In view of this fact—that the admissibility of diaconal functions in connexion with the general interests of the Church was conceded by our first General As-

*Minutes of General Assembly, 1861, p. 16.

†*Ibid.*, p. 14.

‡*Ibid.*, pp. 20, 23, 40.

sembly, and that the concession of it has never been revoked—we might have been content with simply treating it as an assumption, in regard to which there is now no open dispute among us; but inasmuch as there was formerly some difference of opinion touching the matter—and for aught we know may be now—it was deemed best to subject it to a discussion somewhat thorough.

To this view it may be objected, that while the practice of the Church has sanctioned the appointment of persons as committee-men who are not actually members of the bodies appointing them, it is supposed that they might be members; but as deacons cannot be members of Presbyteries, Synods, or Assemblies, it would be illegitimate for those courts to appoint them as committee-men. We reply: First, no more, for the same reason, could a Session appoint a committee of deacons. But surely a Session may commit to a deacon, or a number of deacons, the discharge of a certain duty, say, the collection of money needed for a particular purpose. But if one court may do it, so may all. Secondly, the objection proceeds upon a mere quibble as to the technical word *committee*. The real question is, whether a body, of which deacons cannot be members, may appoint them to the performance of ecclesiastical functions of a temporal nature; and that question, we conceive, is settled by scriptural precedent. The deacons mentioned in the sixth Chapter of Acts were elected by the people; but the record expressly says, that they were appointed by the apostles to distribute the common provision. It is needless to remark that they could not have been members of the apostolic college. It will require no argument to show that when the apostles fell asleep, the same power was lodged in the divinely ordained rulers of the Church.

It may further be objected, that it is unwarrantable to detach the deacon from the service of the particular church to which he is bound by his ordination vows. To this we answer: First, the same objection would lie against the employment of a ruling elder out of immediate connexion with the interests of the particular church of which he is an officer. But no one objects to such a procedure in regard to the elder. The difference between the two

cases could only be made out by showing that while there are general interests of a spiritual character which require the services of the elder, there are no similar interests of a temporal kind which call for those of the deacon. But that, as we have already proved, cannot be done. Secondly, the higher bodies may, under constitutional limitations, command the lower. It is competent for the Session of a church to assign certain duties to the deacons of the same church; so likewise for a Presbytery, to the elders and deacons of the congregations under its care; and so moreover for a Synod, or a General Assembly. Thirdly, no particular church can legitimately segregate itself from the whole flock of which it is a part, or insulate its individual interests to the neglect of the general good. The visible unity of the Church would be impaired to the extent of the severance, and a tendency to Congregationalism established. Fourthly, we do not think that the detachment objected to could be realised in fact.

It gives us pleasure to be able to add to these considerations in favor of the position, that the deacon is not merely a local officer, confined within the limits of a particular congregation, and that the sphere of his operations may be extended so as to embrace the temporal interests of the whole Church, two testimonies from sources which true Presbyterians have been wont to regard with profound respect. The first is from a discourse entitled "The Christian Pastor," by Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge.* He says:

"The unity of the Church of Christ is one of the plainest doctrines concerning it, which is taught in the Scriptures: and its division into sects and parties is one of the greatest evils which has ever been allowed to overtake it on account of its sins. Though the visible church universal is thus unhappily rent, yet each particular portion or denomination of it is still able to appropriate to itself, in some degree, those great principles and reasonings, which rightly apply to the whole, if all were united in one general fold. Thus, we by no means assert of our branch of the Lord's purchased people—what is boastfully and foolishly asserted of themselves by some others—that we constitute *the Church of Christ* on earth. But our received faith is, that into how many parts soever our Church may be divided for convenience' sake, or from neces-

*Pages 25, 26.

sity, either as congregations or as larger portions, still the whole of these parts constitute but one Church. It follows, that all the office-bearers who may be more particularly attached to any one portion of this church are, in the same sense, office-bearers of the whole body, as the particular part is one portion of the whole."

That among these office-bearers Dr. Breckinridge designed to include deacons, is proved by the fact, that he immediately afterwards speaks of them distributively as teachers, rulers, and distributors.

Our next testimony is from Dr. Thornwell. In his *Argument against Church-Boards*, he says :

"The Book provides that our churches should be furnished with a class of officers for the express purpose of attending to the temporal matters of the Church : and these deacons might be made the collecting agents of the Presbytery in every congregation, and through them the necessary funds could be easily obtained and without expense. For transmission to foreign parts, nothing more would be necessary than simply to employ either some extensive merchant in any of our large cities, or a Committee of Deacons appointed by the Assembly for that purpose. So far, then, as the collection and disbursement of funds are concerned, our Constitution has made the most abundant provision.

We know of nothing that more strikingly illustrates the practical wisdom of the divine provision of deacons as collecting agents in each congregation than the fact that, after long and mature experience, the American Board has recommended the appointment of similar agents in each congregation contributing to its funds as the most successful method of increasing its resources. Our book, however, does not confine deacons to particular congregations. There should be a competent number of them in each particular church ; but we insist upon it that Presbyteries, Synods and the General Assembly should also have the deacons to attend to their pecuniary matters. Those ordained at Jerusalem were not confined to a specific congregation, but acted for the whole college of apostles. By intrusting all pecuniary matters into the hands of men ordained under solemn sanctions for the purpose, our spiritual courts would soon cease to be what they are to an alarming extent at present—mere corporations for secular purposes."*

That these views were not hastily formed is evinced by the fact that, having been assailed by a distinguished reviewer, Dr. Thornwell thus proceeds to vindicate them :

* *Coll. Writings*, Vol. iv., pp. 154, 155.

“But how does the reviewer establish his point that the plan set forth in the Argument against Boards is contrary to Scripture? By asserting, first, that deacons are confined to particular churches, and empowered only to take care of the poor. That deacons are officers, elected and ordained in particular churches, is true. So are elders; but as there is nothing in this fact inconsistent with an elder’s acting for the Church at large in our ecclesiastical courts, so there is nothing to prevent the deacon from exercising his peculiar functions in a wider sphere. A pastor is installed over a particular church, but is he at liberty to preach nowhere else? An elder belongs to a specific congregation. Is our Constitution, therefore, wrong in permitting him to sit as a member of Presbytery? If the mere fact of being an officer in a particular church necessarily confines one to that congregation alone, the reviewer will find it a hard task to show how elders and pastors are formed into Presbyteries. He must either admit that the Presbyterian form of government is unscriptural, or that deacons may act for Presbyteries as they act for their particular congregations. His only alternatives are Congregationalism, or the abandonment of his reasoning upon the subject of deacons. His syllogism is, that whoever is installed as an officer in a particular church can never be an officer of the Church catholic; deacons are so installed; therefore deacons can never be officers of the Church catholic. I might change the minor proposition and say, elders are so installed, and how could he avoid the conclusion? He must either abandon his major proposition or abandon Presbyterianism.”

After showing that it is unscriptural to restrict the scope of the deacon’s functions to the care of the poor, and that it is legitimate to extend it so as to include all the temporal business of the Church, Dr. Thornwell further says as to the field of diaconal operations: “It is plain, also, that the deacons acted for the whole college of apostles, not by travelling about with them in their various missionary tours, but by being under their inspection and control while they continued in Jerusalem. They stood in the same relation to them that I would have them occupy in regard to our Presbyteries. The office of deacon, then, as set forth in the Argument against Boards, is both scriptural and constitutional.”*

It would be irrelevant, in a report like this, to discuss the question whether the mode of conducting our missionary operations now employed by our Church, and ultimately acceded to by Dr. Thornwell, be preferable to that originally advocated by him,

**Ibid.*, 199, 200, 201.

their supervision and control immediately by the Presbyteries; viz., all that we design by these quotations is to show that he fully held the view for which we contend in regard to the wide sphere of the deacon's operations.

We have thus proved, by appeals to Scripture, to the principles of Presbyterianism, to the practice of the Presbyterian Church in general, and to the constitutions of the executive committees of our own Church in particular, that the sphere of the deacon's operations is not confined within congregational limits, but that his functions may be employed in connexion with the temporal interests of the Church at large.

SECONDLY. We proceed to indicate the practical consequences which legitimately flow from this conclusion, taken together with those which have been established by our previous discussions.

In the first place, we have seen, by an argument derived from Scripture and the principles of our system, that the higher office of presbyter does not include the lower office of deacon; that those offices are generally different, and that, consequently, diaconal functions, in a regular condition of the Church in which all the offices are or can be filled, ought not to be discharged by presbyters, but by deacons.

In the second place, it has been proved, on scriptural grounds, that "it is not reason" that we should commingle in the same officer the distinct and incompatible duties of different offices, but that each officer, in an ordinary condition of the Church, is restricted to the discharge of the functions appropriate to his own office.

In the third place, it has been shown by elaborate argumentation that the scope of the deacon's functions not only includes the care of the poor, but all the purely temporal business of the Church.

And now, in the fourth place, the conclusion has, through various modes of proof, been reached, that the sphere of the deacon's operations embraces not only the temporal interests of the particular congregation, but also those of the whole Church.

Having already pointed out the application of the first three of

these principles to the interests and methods of particular churches, let us go on, under the sanction of the fourth, consistently to apply them to the general agencies of the Church. And let us go on unflinchingly, as, in the words of Calvin, we have the lamp of Scripture in our hands.

1. The first sort of agencies which we encounter as falling under the scope of these principles is treasurerships. We have seen that wherever purely diaconal functions are to be discharged, deacons ought to be assigned to their performance. As treasurers are charged with purely financial functions, they ought to be deacons. We are glad to know that some of our Presbyteries are carrying this principle into effect. Their treasurers are deacons. So ought the treasurer of every court and of every committee or board to be.

2. In accordance with the same principle, boards of trustees, having ecclesiastical business of a purely financial character to manage, should consist only of deacons. This applies to the Board of Trustees of the General Assembly. Where legal advice is needed, deacons are competent to secure it.

3. We are of opinion that the same principle will apply to the Assembly's Committee of Education. We concur with Dr. Thornwell in the judgment "that its office should be exclusively confined to the aiding of indigent candidates for the gospel ministry. It should have no power to determine their places of education, nor the extent and period of their studies." And as our Church has acted upon that view, there is really no necessity for any functions which deacons may not perform. The whole business of the Committee is exhausted in the receiving and disbursement of money, and is, therefore, properly diaconal. Of that Committee one member should be a salaried treasurer. Should it be connected with another Committee, one treasurer would suffice for both.

4. The Committees of Publication, and of Home and Foreign Missions, stand on a different footing. They have important functions to discharge which are not at all of a diaconal nature, and should, therefore, be simply composed of presbyters. The fact has already been noticed that in the constitutions of the execu-

tive committees adopted by the Augusta Assembly of 1861, it was provided that they might be jointly composed of presbyters, deacons, and private members of the Church. It has so happened, as far as we know, that in the practice of the Church neither deacons nor private members of the Church have had a place on the committees. And as the Assembly, in framing their constitutions, did not make it imperative that those classes of persons should be appointed as constituents of the committees, we are clear that the practice of the Church has, in this respect, been right. For, as has been shown, it is a scriptural principle that the incompatible functions of distinct offices should not be united in the same officers. If it would be unreasonable, the apostles being judges, that presbyters should perform the duties of deacons, much more, for obvious reasons, would it be unreasonable that deacons should discharge those of presbyters. The committees under consideration represent, in a measure, the ruling power of the Assembly, and it would seem to require but little argument to show the incongruity of investing deacons with such authority.

But while this is so, we are equally clear, that as there are diaconal functions which need to be performed in connexion with these committees, the very same principle demands that deacons should be appointed in connexion with, although not as parts of, the committees, for their discharge. A committee of presbyters should be confined to their appropriate duties, and not undertake those which, on scriptural grounds, should be assigned to deacons.

We do not desire to enter into details, but would offer a few suggestions. Should the Committee of Education be made, as we have shown it ought to be, to consist of deacons, and should hereafter be connected with the Committee of Publication, the same treasurer could act for both committees. If the Education Committee should not be connected with that of Publication, as the Assembly has directed that the Publication house should be sold as soon as it can be done to advantage, only a treasurer, who should be a deacon, would be needed in connexion with the Publication Committee.

The administration of the Invalid Fund, requiring strictly only diaconal functions, ought to be intrusted to a committee of deacons. That committee being situated, as we think it best it should be, in the same place with the Committee of Home and Foreign Missions, could be appointed to act in connexion with it, so far as its financial duties are concerned; and the treasurer of the Invalid Fund could at the same time serve as the treasurer of Home and Foreign Missions. Should these suggestions ever be realised, we would have but two treasurers for all our benevolent schemes. Perhaps experience may ultimately show that but one employed for his whole time and adequately remunerated, is really needed.

It is almost needless to say that these principles apply to the executive committees of Synods and Presbyteries.*

Their application to a Board of Directors of a theological seminary may, practically, be opposed by serious difficulties, but as far as it may be practicable, we must, to be consistent, hold that the attempt ought to be made. The interests of other than a financial kind which are intrusted to such a board are so transcendantly important that its members should be appointed with special reference to their qualifications for their management, and not chiefly with regard to their financial ability. A committee of deacons, selected with an eye to their business qualities, as well as their integrity, should, we think, be connected with the board, and charged with the management of investments and other purely secular interests. Of their number one should be appointed treasurer.

We submit these suggestions as indicating what are, in our judgment, some of the special ways in which the principles we have endeavored to establish may receive a practical application. They will have served their purpose, if by means of them the attention of the Church is turned to this question, and her wisdom determines the methods in which the application should be made. That the application ought to be made, we are thoroughly convinced.

*It gives us pleasure to mention the fact that one of the Presbyteries of this Synod has appointed a board of deacons, which is a corporate body, to manage its financial interests.

We now bring to a close these reports, comprising discussions somewhat elaborate upon a subject the literature of which is exceedingly meagre, and prepared, we may be permitted to say, not without earnest supplication for divine guidance and painstaking reflection. Exhortation would perhaps be unnecessary and gratuitous; for, if the principles which we have labored to elucidate are grounded in Scripture, they claim their application by virtue of their own inherent authority. We cannot, however, forbear saying that no Church, in modern times, has fully tested the power of the diaconal arm, employed in connexion with a wise and efficient senate of presbyters. Either that arm, in the foolishness of human wisdom, has been amputated, and the vain attempt made to develop the strength of two arms in one, or if it has been suffered to exist, it has been allowed to remain, to so great an extent, unused, that it has been well-nigh withered. To a Church which, comprehending the mighty power of a divinely ordained diaconate, should give it, upon a spiritual basis, a thorough-going employment, the results would soon afford occasion alike for surprise and joy.

ARTICLE III.

WOMAN'S PLACE IN THE GOSPEL.

I. It is a question of great interest to us who love to dwell upon and study each circumstance in the life of Christ, how he was sustained during his public ministry, from his baptism of consecration at its beginning, till his baptism of blood at its close. Who supported heaven's missionary, that not only left his native shore, but descended from a throne, laying aside his royal robes and divine glory, to publish the gospel of salvation to the heathen of earth at the expense of his life? Whence came the means that ministered to his wants whilst he "went about doing good," "healing the sick," "raising the dead," "preaching the gospel of