

0

**ANTI-DEACON:**

A

**CANDID EXAMINATION OF THE**

**DEACON QUESTION.**

~~~~~  
**BY REV. CHARLES B. MCKEE, A. M.,**

**LATE PASTOR OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ROCHESTER.**  
~~~~~

**"ALTERAM PARTEM AUDI."**

**"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."**



**ROCHESTER:**

**WILLIAM ALLING, PRINTER, 12 EXCHANGE-STREET.**

**1843.**

~~64-2~~  
C10325.25

✓  
HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

(Ms. 26. 1831.)

## DEDICATION.

To the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation in Rochester, N. Y.,  
as a small token of that affection which is cherished for them, in  
hopes that it may be a means of promoting harmony and co-opera-  
tion among them in the maintenance of their testimony, the follow-  
ing essay is respectfully inscribed, with his best wishes and most  
fervent prayers for their present and future welfare,

By their late Pastor,

C. B. McKEE.

Rochester, N. Y., May 1, 1843.

# CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
INTRODUCTION.....	7
GENERAL DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT.....	8

## CHAPTER I.

THE OBJECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH .....	9
SECTION I.—1. To Teach .....	—
SECTION II.—2. To Rule.....	—
SECTION III.—3. To dispense Ordinances .....	—
SECTION IV.—4. To oversee the Church .....	10
SECTION V.—5. To ordain Officers.....	—
SECTION VI.—6. The care of the Poor.....	—

## CHAPTER II.

THE FUNCTIONARIES, OR OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH, AND THEIR DUTIES.....	11
SECTION IX.—1. Pastors.....	—
SECTION XIV.—2. Ruling Elders.....	12
SECTION XIX.—3. The proper duties of these Functionaries....	13
QUESTION: Whether Ruling Elders may impose hands at ordination? considered in a note.....	—

## CHAPTER III.

WHETHER THE DEACON, AS A MERELY TEMPORAL FUNCTIONARY, IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION.....	14
I.—Arguments from the Scriptures in support of the Office, considered.....	—
SECTION XXII.—1. Acts 6: 1—6.....	—
SECTION XXX.—2. Rom. 12: 6, 7.....	16
SECTION XXXII.—3. 1 Cor. 12: 28.....	17
SECTION XXXIV.—4. Phil. 1: 1.....	18
SECTION XXXVI.—5. 1 Tim. 3: 8—12.....	19
SECTION XLII.—6. 1 Pet. 4: 10, 11.....	22
II.—Arguments from the import of the word <i>διακονεω</i> , §45; <i>διακονια</i> , §48; <i>διακονος</i> , §50, considered.....	23
III.—Arguments from the Testimony of the Fathers .....	26
IV.—Arguments against the Office .....	30

## CHAPTER IV.

EXAMINATION OF OBJECTIONS.....	37
SECTION LXXIX.— <i>Objection</i> 1.—The denial of the Deacon's Office is opposed to Calvin, and other Reformers.....	—
SECTION LXXXIII.— <i>Obj.</i> 2.—It opposes Melville, Renwick and others.....	38

SECTION LXXXIV.— <i>Objection</i> 3.—It opposes the Doctrines of the Confession of Faith and Reformation Principles.....	Page. 38
SECTION XCIV.— <i>Obj.</i> 4.—It will injure Congregations incor- porated with Deacons.....	41
SECTION XCVI.— <i>Obj.</i> 5.—Trustees are an innovation, unscrip- tural, and anti-scriptural.....	—
SECTION XCIX.— <i>Obj.</i> 6.—It impugns the wisdom and goodness of the Redeemer.....	42
CONCLUDING ADDRESS.....	45

## APPENDIX.

NOTE 1.—Corroborative Testimony.....	49
NOTE 2.—The authority of the “Fathers.”.....	50
NOTE 3.—Ecclesiastical Incorporations.....	—
NOTE 4.—Church Trustees.....	52
NOTE 5.—Omission of Deacons in the Church.....	56

## NOTE.

In the words quoted from the Greek, it was thought more convenient to give them in their *primitive*, and not in their *inflected* forms as they occur in the text; knowing that, as each word is referred to its proper place, the learned reader can easily turn to the passage, and judge of the fairness of the citations.

## PREFACE.

The object of the following essay, is neither a desire for authorship, or notoriety, nor to subserve any party purpose. The writer knows no party; in the prosecution of what he conceived to be an undeviating course, in the defence of the principles of pure reformation, he has been enabled to resist the temptation of party, on one hand, and to *live*, notwithstanding its oppositions and frowns, on the other. Having, then, no party purpose to serve, nothing to gain, and as little to lose, he has written fearlessly what he believes to be Divine truth, leaving consequences to him who directs all things to his own glory and his people's good.

It is but justice to the subject to observe, that the author was educated from his childhood in the belief that the office of deacon was a Divine institution; this opinion "grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength," without a thorough investigation of the subject. Until in the year 1833, he was appointed to supply a vacant congregation, where a candidate had been chosen to the diaconate, examined, and his ordination appointed to be carried into effect the next Sabbath, by the supply. There were some objections made to the ordination arising from the *mode* practised there—the *imposition of hands*. He was vanquished by *argument* on this point, though not convinced; however, he was told to proceed without imposition, as it was "*immaterial!*"

Having spent the greater part of a night in hearing proofs that *imposition* was a part of the proper form of ordaining deacons, and being at last told it was "*immaterial,*" it excited peculiar feelings on the subject. Feeling himself unacquainted with the history and nature of the office, the author set himself to investigate the matter, to defend the Divine right of deacons; he did try to examine prayerfully and impartially, without reference to any party, but inclined to the side of deacons, interest also tending somewhat that way; guiding his search by the Scriptures alone, he arrived at the conclusion presented in the following pages. Standing now perfectly independent, equally free from being harmed by the triumph or vanquishment of either side; observing the question so warmly agitated, and no one appearing to engage in the cause, he could not resist the call of Providence, and the solicitations of some judicious friends in giving his sentiments publicity.

Much, very much, has been omitted that might have been introduced. The subject has been treated in as plain a manner as was consistent with the nature of his plan; the design being to instruct *the people* on this important subject, by presenting them with something tangible, or accessible. And it is candidly thought, without claiming any merit for the following argument, that a careful and dispassionate examination of the subject, with the Bible in hand, and regardless of

the mere *assertions* that are *accumulated* on the other side, will lead the intelligent, unbiassed mind, to the conclusions presented in this essay.

That it may lead to the discovery of truth, and the promotion of harmony and good order in God's house, is the sincere and unfeigned wish and prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

Rochester, N. Y., May 1, 1843.

## CHRONOLOGICAL REFERENCE:

Exhibiting the era during which the ancient authors, quoted and referred to in this essay, flourished:

A. D.

- 83. *Clemens Romanus*, wrote an epistle to the church at Corinth.  
The most authentic uninspired composition extant.
- 107. *Ignatius*, wrote seven epistles to seven different churches.
- " *Polycarp*, John's disciple, wrote an epistle to the Philippians.
- 150. *Justin Martyr*, a Christian philosopher, but held no ecclesiastical office: wrote two defences of christianity, and a dialogue with Trypho, the Jew.
- 175. *Irenæus*, wrote a refutation of false doctrines, &c.
- 185. *Clemens* of Alexandria, wrote many works; particularly his "*Stromata*."
- 200. *Tertullian*, a presbyter of Carthage; he wrote much.
- 230. *Origen*, a celebrated ecclesiastical writer.
- 250. *Cyprian*, Bishop of Carthage.
- 325. *Eusebius*, a presbyter of Antioch, and an Arian.
- 370. *Jerome*, son of Eusebius, author of the Vulgate translation of the scriptures, and of many religious works.
- " *Epiphanius*, St., born 332; founded a monastery; afterwards, Bishop of Salamis.
- " *Apostolic Constitutions*, or *Canons*; of uncertain authority; they did not make their appearance before the fourth century.
- 398. *Chrysostom*, Bishop of Constantinople.

## INTRODUCTION.

The Lord Jesus Christ is alone the head of his Church,\* the only source of all ecclesiastical authority and power.† He alone has a right to enact laws, institute ordinances and ordain officers to carry out the great purposes of his mission into this world. Consequently, whatever law, ordinance, or officer, introduced into the church claiming Divine authority, that has not the sanction of his appointment, is an unwarranted innovation, insubordination and rebellion.

To complete the organization of the church, her glorious Head called forth various characters, endowed with qualifications adequate to the weighty duties that lay before them. These, were apostles, who had their appointment, furniture and authority, immediately from the Lord Jesus; they were invested with miraculous gifts and powers, which also they could communicate to others; and had an authority, not confined to any local section, but which extended equally over all sections, and in all places. This class of officers being extraordinary, and of course temporary, terminated with the lives of those first appointed by our Lord.

To them, pertained the establishing of the laws, ordinances and officers of the church. In the then incomplete and unsettled state of the church, they ordained and sent forth evangelists with authority to ordain officers, organize churches, and dispense ordinances. The office of the evangelist appears to have differed little from our preaching elder, or presbyter, except that that class of officers was not confined to particular congregations, but was itinerant; they received instruction from, and made their reports to, the apostles from time to time.

In the apostles' days, with the aids of these evangelists, the Christian church was perfected in her organization—as it regards her government, discipline, doctrine and worship. Whatever order, law, officer or ordinance, that has crept into the church since, justly merits the charge of insubordination to, and rebellion against, the wisdom and authority of the King of Zion. It is, then, to the church in the apostles' times, that we are to look for her complete organization,—to this period we are to look for the different grades and functions of her officers. And, happy would it have been for the church, if this investigation had been limited to the scriptures, to which we would do well to give diligent heed. What the permanent and divinely authorized officers of the church were and are, we must learn from the sacred oracles alone, and not from the practice of any people, nor any age; nor from uncertain history.

\* Eph. 1: 22. Col. 1: 18, 19.

† Matt. 28: 18.

## GENERAL DIVISION.

In this essay it is proposed to inquire :

I. What are the grand objects of the Redeemer's establishment of his church on earth ; and what functions devolve on her members in the furtherance of this object ?

II. What are the functionaries divinely appointed to perform these duties ; with the several duties belonging to each ?

III. Whether the Lord Jesus, or his apostles, acting in his name, did ordain and appoint a third class of permanent officers, whose duties regard the temporalities of the church alone ?

### ERRATA.

Page 16, at the end of the last line, add "*placidity ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*" The design of the apostle in this chapter is, to exhort Christians, as mem-

Page 31, line 10, for *New Testament*, read *Old Testament*.

Page 51, line 20, after *remarks*, insert *do*.



## CHAPTER I.

What are the grand objects of the Redeemer's establishment of his church on earth ; and what functions devolve on her members ?

We answer—To display the divine perfections in the punishment of sin, and the salvation of sinners. In the accomplishment of this end, especially as it regards man's salvation, the following objects present themselves :

§1. 1. *The first great object is to teach.* This is the grand pervading feature of the gospel—to instruct man in a knowledge of the divine character, and of his laws ; to discover to him his lost and ruined condition, and the way of recovery through a Mediator. This embraces in it the whole scheme of the gospel system ; and on this the Redeemer lays great stress in commissioning his apostles : “ Go ye therefore, and *teach* all nations, *teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.”\* It behoved “ that repentance and remission of sins should be *preached* in his name among all nations.”† “ To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God ; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified.”‡ To this end the apostle gives his most solemn injunction : “ I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom ; preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.”||

§2. 2. Next to the duty of teaching, that of *governing*, or *ruling* holds the most important place. The church is a society of imperfect beings, aiming at one great object. No society can successfully prosecute any design without laws. Such our Lord has kindly furnished to his church ; which laws must be made known and applied to answer the end contemplated by them. Repeatedly the duties of ruling and submission are enforced in the New Testament Scriptures. Of the former class are these : “ Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.” “ Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”§ And of the latter class are such as these—“ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.”¶ &c.

§3. 3. *The dispensing of ordinances ordinary and special* is another class of duties to be performed in the church. The scriptures are to be expounded publicly, the sealing ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are to be administered. The same authority that gives commission to *teach* and *preach*, authoritatively enjoins the duty of dispensing sealing ordinances : “ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

\* Matt. 28 : 19, 20.

† Luke 24 : 47.

‡ Acts 26 : 18.

§ 2 Tim. 4 : 1, 2.

§ 1 Tim. 5 : 17, 20.

¶ Heb. 13 : 17.

See also 1 Thes. 5 : 12, 13. 1 Cor. 5 : 4, 5.

Tit. 3 : 10, 11. 1 Tim. 1 : 20.

of the Holy Ghost.”\* And the dispensation of the Lord’s Supper is limited by the same authority ; “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?”†

§4. 4. *The supervision, or oversight of the church* is another class of duties prescribed in the church. A particular inspection of the state and condition of the church, and of her members, seems at once a natural and necessary duty. To this the apostle exhorts : “Feed the flock of God, which is among you, taking the *oversight* thereof.”‡ Again : “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”§ In view of this Christ is represented as a good shepherd ¶ going out and coming in before his flock, and as one who “shall feed his flock like a shepherd, who shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom ; and gently lead those that are with young.”¶

§5. 5. *Ordination, or setting apart for official services*, is another duty inculcated. The Lord Jesus Christ has guarded against the presumption of men, who might arrogate to themselves the right of dispensing ordinances,—by confining the power of ordination, or of appointing official functionaries, to those who have received ordination, or authority in a proper way. “No man may take this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”\*\* Paul exhorts Timothy to “exercise the gift, (or authority,) which he had received by the laying on of hands ;” †† and more particularly stated 1 Tim. iv : 14. And he cautions against *laying hands suddenly* on men, lest a *participation* in their sins be the result.††

§6. 6. *The care of the poor is an important duty that belongs to the polity of the Christian church.* “The poor shall never cease out of the land :—therefore, thou shalt open thine hand *wide* unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy.”||| Now in regard to this fact—the continued existence and presence of the poor, ample provisions are made that their case be regarded as a part of the end of a church society. This duty is largely set forth in 2 Cor. 8th and 9th chapters ; and the apostle in his epistle to the Galatians exhorts : “that we should remember the poor.”§§

§7. 7. These particulars comprise a general outline of the whole objects contemplated in the gospel church, exhibiting the duties that devolve upon her subjects : and to one or other of these, as classes of particulars, may all other duties be referred.

\* Matt. 28 : 19, compared with Acts 2 : 38—41. † 1 Cor. 10 : 16. 11 : 23—29.

† 1 Pet. 5 : 2. || Acts 20 : 28. § Ps. 23. John 10. ¶ Is. 40 : 11.

\*\* Heb. 5 : 4. †† 2 Tim. 1 : 6. †† 1 Tim. 5 : 22. ||| Deut. 15 : 11, compared with Matt. 26 : 11. §§ Gal 2 : 10, compared with Rem. 15 : 26. 1 John 3 : 17.

## CHAPTER II.

We proposed in the *second place* to inquire—What functionaries the Lord Jesus has appointed to discharge these duties, with a consideration of the particular duties appertaining to each?

§8. Our Lord has been careful to appoint only such permanent officers as were necessary to accomplish the designs of his kingdom on earth; to whom alone pertain the government and management of the church. These appear to be Ministers, Pastors, Doctors or Teachers, Bishops or Overseers, Elders or Presbyters, Angels and Rulers, constituting but one class; and Elders and Deacons, constituting another class. The former class is, by Presbyterians, admitted to be but different appellations for the same officer,—Pastor or Minister; but there is not such unity of sentiment concerning the latter class. Some consider this class as including two distinct offices; others but one. That all may see on what evidence we maintain the distinct permanent offices of the church, let the following be considered as containing the substance of proof. And first of Pastors.

§9. (1.) *Pastors and Teachers, &c.*, are enumerated in the list of divinely instituted church officers.\* The passages here referred to do not designate the number of officers; but state the fact that God had endowed men with such gifts as qualified them for the duties of important stations, such stations as the constitution of the church required to be filled.†

§10. (2.) *The qualifications* required in the officers of the church go to prove this order. The qualifications of pastors are—blamelessness, the husband of one wife, vigilance, sobriety, of good behavior, hospitality, aptness to teach, temperance, peaceableness, not avaricious, patience, gravity, a good ruler, wisdom, soundness in the faith, &c.‡

§11. (3.) *There are functions committed to a class of men as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;||* and as the charge committed is peculiar, it requires a peculiar class of officers to perform the duties of the charge.

§12. (4.) *The names given to this order of officers* not only designate the subject matter of their employment; but the divine institution of the office. “As ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God,—ambassadors of Christ,”§—“laborers sent into the harvest by the Lord¶—as being over God’s people in his name.”\*\* All which imply a high and important official standing.

§13. (5.) *The reciprocal duties incumbent upon the church* to her pastors prove the same thing: to know, obey, submit to them, honor, love, and maintain them;\*\*\* are duties repeatedly inculcated, implying the existence of functionaries to whom these duties are to be per-

\* Jer. 3: 15—17. Rom. 12: 6—8. 1 Cor. 12: 28. Eps. 4: 8, 11. † Acts 20: 28.  
 ‡ 1 Tim. 3: 2—8. Tit. 1: 5—10. § 1 Cor. 4: 1, 2. ¶ 2 Cor. 5: 20.  
 ¶ Matt. 9: 38. \*\* 1 Thes. 5: 12, 13. Heb. 13: 17. 1 Tim. 5: 17, 18. 1 Cor. 9: 6—15. Gal. 6: 6—8.

formed. These exhortations would not have been pressed so frequently and so solemnly had the office not been of divine institution.

§14. 2. The second class of officers, recognized by Presbyterians, of divine authority, and permanency in the Christian church, is that of Ruling Elder. The substance of proof for this order is the following:

§15. (1.) *The office appears implied in the apostles instructions and exhortations to believers*; \* *ruling* appears to be held forth as distinct from other duties. All the duties enumerated here, [Rom. 12 : 7, 8,] may be included under the head of *prophecy*, embracing all the duties of a pastor; and of *ministering*, including the various functions of the Ruling Elder. The same may be said of 1 Cor. 12 : 28, where, after excluding extraordinary functions, there remain those of *teaching* and *interpreting* tongues, of one class; and helping, aiding and governing of another class.

§16. (2.) The account of the ordination of a plurality of elders in single congregations, † strengthens the presumption that they were *Ruling* Elders, and not *teaching* Elders; ‡ as the demand for preaching at that time would not allow of a plurality of teaching elders.

§17. "The circumstance of our finding it so uniformly stated that there was a *plurality of Elders* ordained in *every church*, is certainly worthy of particular attention here. If there had been a plurality of these officers appointed only in some of the more populous cities, where were probably several worshipping assemblies;—then we might consider this fact as reconcilable with the doctrine of those who assert that all the Elders in the apostolic church were official teachers. But as both the direction and practice were to ordain *Elders*, that is, more than one, at least, in every church, small as well as great, there is evidently very great presumption that it was intended to conform to the synagogue model."||

§18. (3.) The apostle, in exhorting Christians to render due honor to the church officers, plainly distinguishes between "the elders that *rule well*—and those who *labor* in word and doctrine."§ Various attempts have been made to evade the force of this passage, but without success. Who would misunderstand the language where there was no temptation to evade its force? Suppose the students of a university were exhorted by the Provost in this manner: "Let the Professors that *rule well* be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who *labor* in theology and ethics;" is it not obvious that though all *ruled*, yet there are some who do not *labor* in theology and ethics? Dr. Owen remarks: "This is a text of uncontrollable evidence, if it had any thing to conflict withal, but prejudice and interest."¶

\* Rom. 12 : 7, 8. † Acts 14 : 23. 15 : 4, 6. 20 : 20, 28. Jas. 5 : 14. 1 Pet. 5 : 1—3. Tit. 1 : 5. (The argument from this text is conclusive in favor of Ruling Elders. If the ordination of Presbyters required the laying on of the hands of a plurality of Presbyters; and if Titus, a single evangelist, or Presbyter, was instructed to *ordain elders*, the persons whom he ordained must either have been Ruling Elders, in the Presbyterian sense; or Titus must have been a Bishop in the Episcopalian sense, in whom alone, according to them, is vested the power of ordaining Presbyters.)

‡ 1 Thes. 5 : 12, 13. 2 Tim. 4 : 1, 2.

|| Miller on the Rul. El. p. 53.

§ 1 Tim.

5 : 17.

¶ Nat. of Gos. church, c. 7, p. 141.

3. Let us now briefly review the duties more particularly belonging to these functionaries.

§19. (1.) To the pastor belong exclusively, authoritatively to preach the word and expound the scriptures;\* to direct the different parts of public worship;† to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper;‡ to co-operate in ordaining and setting apart the different officers of the church.¶

§20. (2.) To the pastor, in common with the Ruling Elder, pertain the exercise of the discipline of the church;§ to supervise the religious state of the church;¶ to take care of the poor; \*\* to rule in the house of God according to his laws.††

§21. (3.) To the Ruling Elder belongs no peculiar, or exclusive duty, that does not pertain to the Pastor; in fact, all the duties of the latter are included in those of the former; but not *vice versa*. The extent of his duty may be embraced in the following particulars; as he is a help, minister or deacon, he is to assist the Pastor in watching over the flock; in visiting the congregation, especially the sick;‡‡ in providing and distributing the symbols of the Lord's Supper; in ruling and judging in the courts of the Lord's house, inferior and superior; and in the ordination of officers.¶¶ [1].

§22. (4.) And to the Eldership,—Pastor and Ruling Elders, belong properly the care and charge of the spiritual concerns of the whole congregation; the charge of the poor and of the poor's fund. This has already been intimated in our former remarks on the duty of pastor,§§ and will appear still more evident from this fact, that all the contributions of which we have any account in the scriptures, whether made for the poor, or other purposes, were committed to "*the Apostles and Elders*." [2] We are expressly told that many "who had possessions sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the *apostles'* feet."¶¶ It is no valid objection to this that, at this time, there was not a proper class of officers appointed to attend to this business; because about ten years afterwards, when the church at Antioch raised a contribution for the saints at Jerusalem, "they sent it to the *ELDERS*, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."\*\*\* who of course were the proper depositories and distributors of the funds.†††

NOTE 1. It has been a question, "whether Ruling Elders may impose hands at ordinations?" We would reply:

1. That we recognise imposition as pertaining only to Presbyters, or Pastors.

2. Imposition is employed as the symbol of conveying either extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; or gifts of office. Therefore,

3. As Ruling Elders have in their ordination received neither extraordinary gifts, nor ministerial power, consequently they possess nothing that imposition is designed to symbolize, their imposition, therefore, would be unmeaning parade—absurd.

NOTE 2. In the collection of alms, as it respects the manner, or agent, there is nothing official; any person, official or otherwise, may collect (1 Cor. 16: 2), provided it be "*laid at the apostles' feet*." It is the *keeping* and *distribution* that belong to the session.

\* 2 Tim. 4: 2.

† Acts 13: 15.

‡ 1 Cor. 10: 16.

¶ 1 Tim. 5: 22.

§ 1 Tim. 5: 29.

¶ Acts 20: 28.

\*\* 2 Cor. 9: 5.

Acts 11: 30.

†† 1 Tim.

5: 17. Acts 20: 17. Heb. 13: 7, 17.

‡ Jas. 5: 14.

¶ Acts 16: 4. 15: 6.

§§ See §6.

¶¶ Acts 4: 35, 37.

\*\*\* Acts 11: 29, 30.

††† Acts 24:

17, compared with Rom. 15: 26, 27. 1 Cor. 16: 1, 4. 2 Cor. 8: 4. Phil. 4: 18, compared with c. 2: 25.

### CHAPTER III.

We are now to inquire whether the Lord Jesus, or his Apostles acting in his name, did ordain and appoint a third class of permanent officers whose duties regard the temporalities of the church alone?

The method proposed in this part of our investigation shall be to consider—

I. The scriptures which are brought to support the claims of this office.

II. The evidence that may be derived from the import of the words *διακονία*, *διακονία* and *διακονος* examined in the original.

III. The arguments arising from the testimony of the Fathers.

IV. Arguments that are alleged against the office.

I. We are to consider the scriptures that are employed to establish the office of Deacon in the Christian church, as a mere temporal functionary. We shall take the scriptures in the order of their occurrence. And—

§23. 1. Acts 6: 1—6. “And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. 3. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of good report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. 5. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch. 6. Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed they laid their hands on them.”

This narrative gives us an account of an extraordinary event, which, unless restricted by other passages, cannot be adduced as sufficient or fair evidence of the institution of the office of Deacon, as a merely temporal functionary. The gospel, at this time, was making rapid progress, but it met with great opposition from the Jews.—The Holy Ghost disposed converts to Christianity as a means of common defence and support to make large contributions by disposing of a part, or the whole of their property, and to throw it into a common stock—not for the poor exclusively,—this supposition no where appears probable,—but for rich and poor who were now maintained from this common fund. The deposit was extraordinary and temporary. The community of goods was not designed to be a permanent fund, and therefore the appointment of a class of officers whose exclusive business was to dispose of a fund that was extraordinary, and temporary, would have been superfluous and absurd in the highest degree. Justin Martyr, who was no ecclesiastic, and who of course

had no ecclesiastical purpose to serve, informs us "that after the persecutions against the Christians had scattered them, the community of goods ceased, and the distribution also; and the men who had been ordained with Stephen, after his martyrdom, devoted themselves exclusively to the ministry of the word."\*

§24. But we should distinguish between the *occasion* of an appointment, or ordination, and its *exclusive object*. Suppose a minister is sent to a new congregation to dispense the Lord's Supper, and finds but one Ruling Elder there, and he deems it necessary to ordain another expressly to assist in conducting the solemnity in a proper manner, it will not follow that this Elder is, thenceforward, to be employed only in serving tables;—because the nature of his office includes more. Neither in the case before us will it follow that these seven men were afterwards to be exclusively employed about that which was the mere *occasion* of their ordination. The elder's office alleged above covered more, and when occasion offers he may attend to all the duties of Ruling Elder which are covered by his office.

§25. The true account of the narrative seems to be this:—the Jewish converts, on account of their espousal of Christianity, were liable to lose their property; and many, in accordance with the divine command, "were willing to forsake all for the kingdom of heaven:" God therefore disposed them to sell their property, and to throw the proceeds into a common stock as before observed. Jealousies arose, between the Jewish, and Grecian, or Hellenistic *converts*,—not poor,—about the distribution of this stock. The apostles with the Elders and brethren had thus far attended to this matter; but from the nature of the apostolic office, they, being itinerants, travellers, and about shortly to journey into other parts in the prosecution of their commission,—found it expedient, in consideration of the murmurs already existing, to ordain these seven men as evangelists, at once to supply their place in preaching the gospel, and to assist in the distribution of the common stock—"to every one as they had need." But when the fund would be exhausted, the fiscal part of their appointment, in so far as it may have had any peculiarity in it appertaining to this fund, would terminate also; yet still as ministers, as we have seen, they had "a care for the poor at all times."†

§26. This account appears the more probable when we consider that the qualifications required are the same that are required in pastors or bishops—"men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." The subsequent employment and history of these men justify this conclusion: "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great miracles among the people."‡ That he preached is evident from the conduct of his enemies: they first disputed with him,|| and then suborned men to say they had "heard him speak blasphemous words;"§ and when they were scattered from Jerusalem, "Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached CHRIST unto them." And he went thence "to Azotus, and preached in all the cities till he came to Cesarea."¶ He not only preached but we find him baptizing in

\* 2 Apol. p. 162. † See §6. ‡ Acts 6: 8. || Acts 6: 9. § Acts 6: 11, 13. ¶ Acts 8: 5—7, 12, 40.

the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women, among whom was the Eunuch.\*

§27. *The mode of their ordination* goes strongly to prove this opinion. "Whom they set before the apostles, and *when they had prayed* or, *while they were praying*, (*προσευχόμενοι*) they laid on them their hands."† Imposition of hands was employed in the New Testament as a symbol of two facts; the communication of extraordinary powers, or gifts;‡ and of ministerial authority.¶ Now, suppose these persons had been set apart to a mere temporal office, the possession of extraordinary gifts and powers are not directly necessary, as there were no extraordinary duties to be performed by them as merely temporal officers; but as it is evident that they had conferred on them not only extraordinary gifts, but *ministerial authority*, it is reasonable to infer that the imposition was symbolical of conveying ministerial authority, and not adroitness in counting or keeping money, distributing bread, or serving tables alone. That they did preach and administer sealing ordinances is certain; but that their office was exclusively concerned about temporalities is absolutely uncertain, and can not be proved. This opinion is corroborated by the authority of Polycarp, who calls them "MINISTERS in Christ;"§ and by Ignatius, who styles them "the MINISTERS of the mysteries of Jesus Christ."¶

§28. It is no substantial objection to this "that the seven were appointed to relieve the APOSTLES from a portion of their labors, that they might have leisure for the ministry of the word." The supposition is contrary to fact; they did not *relieve* the apostles at all; they were ordained and left to fill the apostles' place in all matters of ecclesiastical service, as the apostolic office of the former obliged them to depart,\*\* and shortly after they did depart to preach the gospel and establish the church elsewhere.

§29. Of still less weight, if possible, is the assertion—"that the preaching of Philip is easily explained. He became an evangelist, having purchased to himself a good degree." [1] This is a mere rhetorical flourish—an assertion without proof, and without the possibility of proof. It is positively denied that they were ordained again, and according to all just rules of logic, where it is our privilege to deny, it is our opponent's place to prove; or in the absence of proof, to admit our position. The only kind of proof admissible here will be scripture, on which authority our position rests; or fair, legitimate inference. The former is wanting; and the latter cannot be produced without the aid of sophistry.

§30. 2. The next Scripture that is usually adduced in support of the Deacon's office is Rom. 12: 6, 7—"Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with sim-

NOTE 1. Rev. J. M. Willson's Deacon, p. 21, bottom.

\* Acts 8: 12, 38.  
13: 3. 1 Tim. 5: 22.  
3: 13.

† Acts 6: 6.  
§ Epis. Phil. c. 7.

‡ Acts 8: 17. 19: 6. 28: 8.  
¶ Epis. Mag. c. 6.

|| Acts  
\*\* 1 Tim.



bers of the same body," to the proper exercise of the several gifts bestowed upon the church's members, whether official or private persons, verse 4. The apostle enumerates the possession of gifts, for the following duties:—1. Prophecy; 2. Ministry; 3. Teaching; 4. Exhortation; 5. Giving; 6. Ruling; 7. Shewing Mercy. Now, if this passage be designed as an exhortation to official characters exclusively, it proves too much: it will prove that there were seven different kinds of offices then in the church; because, if it refers to officers at all, as such, it is but mere fancy to say, that but one, two or three officers are to be understood. Who dare say that the above belong only to the Pastor, Ruling Elder, and Deacon? If they do, there is not much logic in the apostle's classification, if, as diaconists maintain, we are to understand the 1st, 3d, and 4th, as belonging to the Pastor; the 6th, to the Ruling Elders, and the 2d, 5th, 7th, as pertaining to the Deacon. Such confusion of arrangement would be altogether inconsistent with the apostle's usual perspicuous method.

§31. It is not denied that the apostle's exhortation embraces all the officers of the church; but it is peremptorily denied that his exhortation contemplates them alone, and that thence we may legitimately infer the permanent officers of the church. As remarked, all the duties enjoined here, may be referred to the duties of Pastor and Ruling Elder, together with the members of the church. If "giving," is designative of office, it would imply, by a parity of reasoning, that all who give, are officers—deacons. But the passage will not prove just *three* distinct, permanent officers, and no more. Let the plain reader lay aside all controversy, and read the chapter to ascertain the apostle's design, and we are persuaded he will come to the same conclusion. If three distinct offices must be proved, the proof must be derived from some other testimony; as this text will not, without violence, prove it.

§32. 3. Another passage brought forward in the same cause, is 1 Cor. 12: 28. "And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then, gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." Here, the apostle enumerates the following classes:—1. Apostles; 2. Prophets; 3. Teachers; 4. Workers of miracles; 5. Gifts of healing; 6. Helps; 7. Governments; 8. Diversities of tongues, or interpreters, ver. 10. The general design of the apostle here is somewhat similar to that proposed in Rom. ch. 12: To exhort Christians to the faithful exercise of those gifts with which God had endowed them, that they be not lifted up and become proud on account of them; and the reason is, because, "they are the body of Christ and members in particular:" v. 27. But, supposing that we have here a complete enumeration of all the officers of the church, extraordinary and ordinary, which we do not deny may be the case, let us see whether we can fairly deduce just *three* permanent officers, and no more, nor fewer. Apostles, prophets, workers of miracles, and gifts of healing, are admitted by all to be extraordinary, and therefore have ceased to exist; there remain now, teachers and diversities of tongues, which it is believed are, without opposition, referred to the Pastor. The former

of the two remaining gifts, *helps* and *governments*, has been referred to the deacons, and the latter to the Ruling Elder; but the word *helps*, (*αἰτληψις*) no more proves the office of deacon, than it proves the office of the boy who rings the bell at the priest's side when he is saying mass. The word means aid, assistance, or one who aids or assists, and is just as applicable to the office of Ruling Elder, whose office is admitted by all, as it is to that of deacon, whose office is questioned. Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture is just as plausible as that contended for by diaconists; "that these were the apostles' helpers, who accompanied them and baptized those who were converted by them," agreeably to Paul's own statement; "I baptized none but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name."\* *Helps* and *governments* may represent the office of Ruling Elder; but certainly neither of the terms proves the distinct office of deacon.<sup>1</sup>

§33. These remarks may not be considered as a satisfactory exposition of the passage; as in fact, it is impossible satisfactorily to explain all the particular characters enumerated in the text, by limiting them to a *certain* or *definite* number of officers; yet, in the general, the observations will be found to be correct; and as it respects its application to officers, it will appear as satisfactory to the unprejudiced reader as any of the numerous commentaries on the text. If the exposition does not exclude the office of deacon *from the verse*, it plainly shows that the diaconate can not be proved *by it*. The best lexicographers and critics give, as the import of the word *αἰτληψις*, a similar meaning. See Suicer, Thesaur., and Wolfius, Theophylact, Gennodius, Vitringa, &c., &c.

§34. 4. Philippians 1: 1. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:" is supposed to furnish one of the most conclusive and irrefutable proofs of the office of deacon as distinct from that of bishop, or pastor and ruling elder, that occur in the New Testament. This appears to be the most direct proof for the office of deacon that can be furnished; and is thought to be incontrovertible. Yet, an inspection of the passage will show to the candid inquirer, that as a proof, it is neither conclusive nor unexceptionable. The apostle's design appears to be to comfort the Philippians on account of their solicitude for his imprisonment; to check a party spirit among them; to encourage to unity; and to guard against Judaizing teachers. He addresses his epistle to "the bishops and deacons;" no mention is made of Ruling Elders; but, as we have already shown, that in the organization of congregations, "el-

NOTE 1. "With respect to the terms, *helps*, (*αἰτληψις*), and *governments*, (*κυβερνήσεις*)," says a learned Presbyterian writer, "they are not elsewhere found in the New Testament. Being abstract, and placed among extraordinary 'gifts' expressly so denominated, (v. 31,) they could have signified nothing else to a people to whom had been dispensed only spiritual things. Nor does evidence exist that any officer of a Christian church was ever called by either of these names. That interpretation which makes *helps*, *deacons* and *governments*, *lay-elders*, is not only conjectural and gratuitous, but preposterous; for it places the order of *deacons* before that of *presbyters*."

See Dr. J. P. Wilson's Church Gov't. p. 274, and Chrysostom on the passage.

\* 1 Cor. 1: 14, 15.

ders were ordained in every city ;\* yet there is no account of the ordination of deacons in every city, nor in *any* city, if we except the narrative of Acts 6. And as in the management of the charitable affairs of the Philippians, who appear to have been especially *forward in that matter*,† we have no intimation of their deacons being concerned, we may justly question their existence. Had there been deacons there, one would naturally have supposed that one of them would have been sent with their offering to Paul in prison, instead of sending it by Epaphroditus, who was a minister ; or as Paul, whose authority will not be questioned, styles him “ my brother, and fellow companion in labor, and fellow soldier.”‡ Now, as it is probable there were, in large cities, occasionally, if not permanently, more than one bishop, (and it is certain that Paul promises to send Timothy, who with Epaphroditus, would make a plurality of bishops,) and as we have reason to believe there was a plurality of elders in every congregation ; and finally, as pastors and elders, (the latter of whom are helps, aids, or assistants to the former,) are competent to the management of all ecclesiastical matters, spiritual and temporal, as has been shown under the duties of those two acknowledged officers, is it not more reasonable, as well as more safe to suppose the apostle refers to these two, than to the bishops and *deacons*, in the modern sense of the term ? Polycarp, in his epistle to the Philippians, addresses *Elders*, but not *deacons* : “ Let the Elders be tender and merciful, compassionate towards all, reclaiming those which have fallen into errors ; visiting all that are weak ; not negligent of the widow and the orphan, and of him that is poor ; but ever providing what is honest in the sight of God and man ; abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unrighteous judgment ; avoiding covetousness ; not hastily believing a report against any man ; not rigid in judgment ; knowing that we are all faulty, and obnoxious to judgment.”|| It is more than probable that if a savage were taught to read, without ever having heard of the Bible or a church ; and having the Bible put into his hands, and directed to read this verse to learn the mind of the Spirit, that he would come to the same conclusion, to wit,—that there were but two classes of officers at Philippi.

§35. It will be no satisfactory offset to this reasoning to say, that under the term *bishops*, is included that of *ruled elders*. This supposition is a mere presumption, or evasion. For it has been shown that there was a plurality of elders in the same place ; but it has not been, nor can it be shown that there was a plurality of deacons, or a single deacon in any church, except this text shows it. And since the term *deacon*, signifies a person *who performs any labor, or service*, we have presumption presented as argument against this fact—against certainty.

§36. 5. Another passage supposed to be of equal weight with the former, is found in 1 Tim. 3 : 8—12. “ Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre ; 9. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

\* See §16. Tit. 1: 5. † Phil. 4: 15. ‡ Phil. 2: 25.  
 || Polycarp Ep. Phil. §6.

10. And let these also first be proved ; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 11. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things. 12. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well." That the reader may see the full force of the argument derived from this portion of divine record, it will be advantageous to compare the qualifications in each of the functionaries here enumerated, that we may see how far they agree, or differ.

### §37. THE BISHOP MUST BE

1. Blameless, ver. 2, (*anepileptos*) *unblameable, irreprehensible.*
2. The husband of one wife, ver. 2, (*aner mias gunaikos.*)
3. Vigilant, ver. 2, (*nephaleos*, from *ne pio*, not to drink,) *sober, temperate, abstinent, circumspect, prudent.*
4. Sober, v. 2, (*sophron*) *of sound mind, sane, sober-minded, temperate, having a well regulated mind, discreet.*
5. Of good behavior, v. 2, (*kosmios*) *desirous of order and decorum, decorous, orderly, decent, becoming, modest.*
6. Given to hospitality, v. 2, (*philoxenos*), *kind to strangers, hospitable.*
7. Apt to teach, v. 2, (*didaktikos*), *skillful in teaching.*
8. Not given to wine, v. 3, (*me paroinos*), *not a tippler, or one who sits long at wine.*
9. No striker, v. 3, (*me plektes*), *one who is not contentious, or censorious, or given to reproaches.*
10. Not greedy of filthy lucre, v. 3, (*aischrokerdes*), *eager for dishonorable gain.*
11. Patient, v. 3, (*epieikes*), *easily yielding, gentle, mild.*
12. Not a brawler, v. 3, (*amachos*), *not contentious, not quarrelsome.*
13. Not covetous, v. 3, (*aphilarguros*), *not fond of money, not covetous.*

### THE DEACONS MUST BE

1. Blameless, v. 10, (*anegkletos*), *unblameable, irreproachable.*
2. Husbands of one wife, v. 12. *The same words as of bishops.*

[See quotation from Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians, (§34,) where his qualifications of the Elder, precisely agree with those which Paul here requires in the Deacon.]

3. Not given to much wine, v. 8, (*prosechon*), *not giving themselves up to, not addicted to wine.*
4. Not greedy of filthy lucre, v. 8. *The same word as of bishops.*

14. One that ruleth well his house, v. 4, [*proistamenos*,] *who is set over, who presides, who governs with authority.*
15. One that hath his children in subjection, v. 4. [*hupotage*,] *subordination, submission.*
16. With all gravity, v. 4, [*seminotes*,] *gravity, dignity, seriousness.*
17. Not a novice, v. 6, [*neophytos*,] *newly planted in the church.* Compare 2 Tim. 2: 2. Tit. 2: 7, 8.
18. Have a good report, v. 7, [*marturia*,] *testimony, witness borne, public attestation.*
5. Ruling their houses well, v. 12. *The same word.*  
[But it is said deacons are not to rule, but to collect, take care of, and distribute money.]\*
6. Ruling well their children. *Same word as 14.*
7. Must be grave, v. 8, (*semnos*,) *serious, dignified, honorable.*
8. Holding the mystery of the faith, v. 8, (*musterion*,) *system of faith.*
9. Not double-tongued, v. 8, (*dilogos*,) *not deceitful, saying one thing to one man, and another thing to another; and thus of good report.*

§38. Here it appears that the qualifications of the bishop enumerated by the apostle, are eighteen; and those of the deacon, are nine. Of the eighteen qualifications of the bishop, the 3d, 8th and 9th, belong to the same class—intemperate use of wine, and its effects. The 4th, 11th and 12th qualifications, belong more properly to the bishop than to any other officer; the 7th belongs exclusively to the bishop; the 10th and 13th belong to the same class—covetousness—but viewed in different aspects.

§39. Now, of these qualifications, the 1st and 2d of the deacon, agree exactly with the corresponding numbers of the bishop; so also the 3d of the deacon, agrees with the 8th of the bishop; as does the 4th of the deacon, agree with the 10th and 13th of the bishop; the 5th, 6th and 7th of the deacon, identify with the 14th, 15th and 16th of the bishop; and the 8th and 9th of the deacon, substantially coincide with the 17th and 18th of the bishop.

§40. It must be evident to any impartial, unprejudiced person, that no argument can fairly be drawn from this passage in favor of a modern deacon—whose office is exclusively devoted to temporalities, tables and the poor. There is not a single qualification named that we would expect to find in a functionary of the kind supposed. Had the 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 11th, belonging to the bishop, been set down to the account of the deacon, the application of the passage to that office would have had some plausibility. But as it is, there is no shadow of ground to plead the office hence, except from the *name*: but the import of the name shall be considered in its proper place.

§41. But apply the passage to the office of Ruling Elder, and every particular holds good without exception. This application seems the more just and reasonable, when we observe the qualification of *teaching* among those of the bishop, which belongs exclusively

\* See THE DEACON, p. 22, l. 4.

to him, omitted in the qualification of the deacon, as he is called here; and when we notice the particular qualification for *RULING*, (in our 5th and 6th qualifications for deacons,) required here, which in no way pertains to deacons; nor is *ruling* in the church claimed for them by their ablest advocates. True, the reasons assigned why a bishop ought to "rule his house well," expressed in the 5th verse, are not repeated here, yet it is obviously implied as the same word—conveying the idea of *authority*, and with the same illustration, is employed in both cases, (compare v. 12, with v. 4,) it is a legitimate inference, that the same kind of ruling, though perhaps not to the same extent, is required of the one, that is required of the other; which again will exclude the office of a merely temporal deacon.

§42. 6. The only remaining passage that is brought as proof on this subject, worthy of notice, is 1 Pet. 4: 10, 11. "As every man hath received the gift, so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth." It is evident that the apostle is not here exhorting to official, but to Christian duties; to the exercise of Christian graces; to love, hospitality, and to the proper use of such talents as God has been pleased to bestow; "whether natural abilities, learning, influence, wealth, authority, or spiritual endowments;" these "are required to be employed and improved for the advantage of the brethren, both in temporal and spiritual concerns."\* It has been said that *χαρίσμα*, (*gift*), here means office, and that the apostle is exhorting to the discharge of official duties. Than which nothing can be further from fact; the word occurs but seventeen times in the New Testament,† and in no case does it specifically denote office; but it signifies favor *conferred*, *free gift*, *benefit*; or the *miraculous gift*, or *power conferred by the Holy Ghost*. The exhortation of the text does not exclude official characters; but it does not in any item necessarily imply them; much less prove a distinct order, claimed by the advocates of modern deacons. All the duties exhorted to may be covered by the offices of Pastor and Ruling Elder, which are, as already shown above, conceded officers; but its uncertainty and obscurity, when employed to prove the office of deacon, is not only unsatisfactory, but it excites a doubt of the existence of any such an office-bearer as deacon, whose support depends entirely upon mere *names*, or doubtful and obscure passages of Scripture.‡

§43. From the foregoing portions of Scripture and the remarks thereon, it will be obvious to the candid reader, that while we distinctly admit and recognize two distinct, permanent, ecclesiastical officers, it does not so clearly appear that there is a third; or, if we admit a third, we may as clearly plead for more. The proofs for the deacon are so arbitrary, doubtful and far-fetched, that the mind must have a strong tendency that way before it will yield a cordial assent to them. But that we may do full justice to the subject, let us—

\* Scott in loco. † *Charisma*, (*gift*), occurs in the following places, Rom. 1: 11. 5: 15, 16. 6: 23. 11: 29. 12: 6. 1 Cor. 1: 7. 7: 7. 12: 4, 9, 28, 30, 31. 2 Cor. 1: 11. 1 Tim. 4: 14. 2 Tim. 1: 6, and text. ‡ See Appendix, note 1.

§44. II. Consider the import of the terms in which the office of deacon is supposed to be couched; they are these: *Diakoneo*, *diakonia* and *diakonos*. This inquiry seems the more important, as great stress is laid on these terms, as designative of office: *diakonei*,\* “exercises the deacon’s office.” And *diakonos*,† is also an “official designation.” *Diakonia*, “deaconship.”‡

§45. 1. “*Diakoneo*,” is compounded of *dia*, diversity, and *koneo*, to hasten, it signifies to be an attendant, to afford assistance, or give supplies of necessary things; to serve or wait upon. It occurs thirty-seven or thirty-eight times in the New Testament, in the following places, with the annexed import. Observe, the words printed in *italics*, are the translation of the original words.

§46. Matthew 4: 11—“The angels *ministered* unto him”—Christ.

Also, Mark 1: 13—similar account.

Matt. 8: 15—“Peter’s mother *ministered* to them.” Of similar import are Mark 1: 31. Luke 4: 39.

Matt. 20: 28—“The Son of man came not to be *ministered* unto,” (have the deacon’s office exercised towards him,) “but to *minister*”—(to exercise the deacon’s office.) Mark 10: 45—the same.

“25: 44—“When saw we thee in prison and did not *minister* unto thee?”—(did not exercise the deacon’s office.)

“27: 55—“Many women followed, *ministering* unto him.” Mark 15: 41—the same.

Luke 4: 39—Peter’s wife’s mother “arose and *ministered* unto them.”

“8: 3—“Joanna and Susannah *ministered* unto him.”

“10: 40—“Martha’s sister left her to *serve* alone.”

“12: 37—“The Lord of these servants will come forth, and *serve* them.”

“17: 8—“Make ready and *serve* me till I have eaten.”

“22: 26—“Let the chief be as he that doth *serve*.”

“22: 27—“He that *serveth*.—I am as he that *serveth*.”

John 12: 2—“Martha *served*.”

“12: 26—“If any man *serve* me, let him follow me; if any man *serve* me, him will my Father honor.”

Acts 6: 2—“It is not reason that we should *serve* tables.”

“19: 22—“Paul sent to Macedonia two of them that *ministered* unto him.” Timothy and Erastus.

Rom. 15: 25—Paul went unto “Jerusalem, to *minister* unto the saints.” Quere: where were the deacons?

2 Cor. 3: 3—Believers are declared to be—“the epistle of Christ *ministered* by us.”

“8: 19—Titus and a brother—“chosen of the churches to travel with us, with the grace which is *ministered* by us.”

“8: 20—“No man should blame us in this abundance which is *administered* by us.”

1 Tim. 3: 10—“Let them *use the office of a deacon*, being found blameless;”—as before rendered—“let them *minister*, being found blameless.”

\* THE DEACON, p. 6.      † p. 7.      ‡ p. 6.

- 1 Tim. 3: 13—"They that have *used the office of a deacon well*,"—  
but, rendered as above—"they that *minister well*."
- 2 Tim. 1: 18—"Onesiphorus *ministered* to me at Ephesus."
- Philemon 13—"Paul would have retained Onesimus that he might  
have *ministered* unto him."
- Heb. 6: 10—"God will not forget your work in that ye," (the be-  
lieving Hebrews,) "have *ministered* to the saints and do *minis-  
ter*."
- 1 Pet. 1: 12—"The prophets did *minister* the things which the an-  
gels desire to look into."
- " 4: 10—"As every man hath received—so *minister* the one to  
the other."
- " 4: 11—"If any man *minister*, let him do it as of the ability  
which God giveth."
- §47. Thus it plainly appears that in no one of these places does  
the word "*diakoneo*" point out the functions of an office, and conse-  
quently an office cannot be inferred from it—unless the context deter-  
mines the fact.
- §48. 2. "*Diakonia*," from "*diakoneo*," ministry, service. This  
term is used about thirty-three times in the New Testament.
- Luke 10: 40—"Martha was cumbered about much *serving*."
- Acts 1: 17—"Judas obtained part of the *ministry* (deaconship) with  
the other apostles." Some maintain that Judas was a deacon,  
and "carried the bag," to receive the money. A noble pre-  
decessor!
- " 6: 1—"The Grecians murmured against the Hebrews, "be-  
cause their widows were neglected in the daily *ministry*."
- " 6: 4—"We will give ourselves to the *ministry* of the word."
- " 11: 29—"The disciples determined to send *relief* (*diakonia*)  
to the brethren." *Note*.—They sent it to the *elders* at Jerusa-  
lem by Barnabas and Saul, even after these temporal officers,  
as is alleged, were appointed.
- " 12: 25—"Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem after  
they had fulfilled their *ministry*." Hence it appears there were  
no deacons at Jerusalem at this time, A. D. 41, about 10 years  
after the ordination, Acts 6.
- " 20: 24—"Paul "counts not his life dear that he might fulfil his  
*ministry* which he had received of the Lord Jesus."
- " 21: 19—"At Jerusalem, Paul "declared what things God had  
wrought by his *ministry*."
- Rom. 11: 13—"Paul the apostle to the Gentiles, says—"I magnify  
mine *office*,"—deaconship.
- " 12: 7—"If any man have the gift of *ministering*, let him wait  
on his *ministry*."
- " 15: 31—"Paul prays that "his *service* which he has for the  
saints at Jerusalem, may be accepted."
- 1 Cor. 12: 5—"There are differences of *administrations*, but the same  
Lord.
- " 16: 15—"The house of Stephanas addicted themselves to the  
*ministry* of the saints." When reasoning against the Baptists,  
we maintain that a *house*, includes in it the presence of the



heads of the family, and all minors. If good in that case, so of deacons; then, here we have a whole family addicted, that is, devoted to the *office of deacons*.

2 Cor. 3: 7, 8, 9—"If the *ministration* of death be glorious: the *ministration* of the spirit is rather glorious: if the *ministration* of condemnation be glory; much more doth the *ministration* of righteousness exceed in glory."

"4: 1—"As we have this *ministry*, (the gospel, see v. 3) as we have received mercy, we faint not."

"5: 18—"God hath given us the *ministry* of reconciliation."

"6: 3—"Giving no offence in any thing, that the *ministry* be not blamed."

"8: 4—"The church of Macedonia prayed us, "that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of *ministering* to the saints."

"9: 1—"As touching the *ministering* to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write."

"9: 12—"The *administration* of this service, (to wit, their bountiful gift,) not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God."

"9: 13—"By the experiment of this *ministration*, they glorify God," &c.

"11: 8—"I robbed the other churches, taking wages of them for your *service*."

Eph. 4: 12—"God gave some (*'gifts,'* v. 8, and these are,) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, pastors and teachers, for the work of the *ministry*."

Col. 4: 17—Paul says to Archippus, (a noted preacher at Colosse,) "Take heed to thy *ministry* which thou hast received."

1 Tim. 1: 12—Paul thanks "Jesus Christ for putting him into the *ministry*."

2 Tim. 4: 5—Paul exhorts Timothy "to make full proof of his *ministry*," as an evangelist.

"4: 11—Paul says Mark "is profitable to him for the *ministry*."

Heb. 1: 14—The angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to *minister* to the heirs of salvation."

Rev. 2: 19—Of the church of Thyatira, Christ says, "He knows her works, charity, *service* and faith."

§49. Hence it appears that in no single instance of all these quotations, is the word *diakonia*, employed to designate any peculiar office, as distinct from others. The term signifies *service* of any kind, and no more points out the deacon's office, than the word "*labor*," does that of the pastor.

§50. 3. *Diakonos*, servant, from *diakoneo*. This word occurs about thirty times,—in the following places:

Matt. 20: 26—Christ says, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your *servant*."

"22: 13—"Then said the king to the *servants*, bind him hand and foot."

Matt. 23 : 11—"But he that is greatest among you, let him be your *servant*."

Mark 9 : 35—Christ said to his disciples, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be *servant* of all."

" 10 : 43—"Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your *minister*."

John 2 : 5—The miracle at Cana, "His mother said unto the *servants*."

" 2 : 9—"The *servants* which drew the water, knew."

" 12 : 26—Christ says, "Where I am, there shall my *servant* be also."

Rom. 13 : 4—The magistrate is "the *minister* of God to thee for good ; he is the *minister* of God, a revenger."

" 15 : 8—Jesus Christ, "a *minister* of the circumcision."

" 16 : 1—"I commend Phebe, a *servant* [a *deaconess*,] of the church which is at Cenchrea."

1 Cor. 3 : 5—"Paul and Apollos are *ministers* by whom ye believed."

2 Cor. 3 : 6—Paul says, "God hath made us able *ministers* of the New Testament."

" 6 : 4—The apostles in "all things proved themselves as *ministers* of God."

" 11 : 15—"It is no great thing if Satan's *ministers* be transformed into *ministers* of righteousness." So also, v. 23, "*ministers* of Christ."

Gal. 2 : 17—"Is Christ the *minister* of sin ?"

Eph. 3 : 7—Paul was made "the *minister* of the Gentiles."

" 6 : 21—"Tychicus, a brother [in the gospel ministry,] and faithful *minister* in the Lord."

Phil. 1 : 1—"Paul and Timotheus,—to the saints, with the bishops and *deacons*."

Col. 1 : 7—"Epaphras, a faithful *minister* of Christ,"—called *doulos*, 4 : 12.

" 1 : 23—"I, Paul, am made a *minister* of the gospel of Christ," v. 25, same.

" 4 : 7—"Tychicus, a brother and faithful *minister* and fellow servant in Christ."

1 Thes. 3 : 2—"We sent Timotheus, our brother and *minister* of God."

1 Tim. 3 : 8—"Likewise must the *deacons* be grave."

" 3 : 12—"Let the *deacon* be the husband of one wife."

" 4 : 6—If Timothy put the brethren in mind of the latter day apostacy, "he shall be a good *minister* of Jesus Christ."

§51. In the above thirty quotations, the only places where *diakonos* occurs, the term is indiscriminately used as applicable to Christ, to ministers of the gospel, men, women, servants, magistrates and devils ; and, excepting in the solitary cases, Phil. 1 : 1—and 1 Tim. 3 : 8—12, it does not designate office ; and in these three cases, as may be seen from sections thirty-four and thirty-seven, it is rendered very questionable whether it refers at all to the *deacon*, in the modern sense.

We are now to give some attention to the

IIIrd. Thing proposed—to examine the weight and extent of the ar-

gments derived from authority,—the Fathers. As it respects this source of evidence, let the following things be premised :

§52. 1. The testimony of neither ancient nor modern Fathers can give Divine authority to any institution. They are mere human witnesses, whose testimony is entitled to no higher credit than other men's, under similar circumstances.

§53. 2. Their testimony is not to be relied upon, when the scriptures are silent on the subject. Their testimony is often obviously erroneous. Take a few examples: *Irenæus* says, that *Linus* was made bishop of Rome by Paul and Peter, whose successor was *Anacletus*, and his successor, *Clement*. But *Tertullian* says, *Clement* was the first bishop of Rome after Peter. *Eusebius* says, Peter was the first bishop of Antioch; and again, he says, that *Euodius* was the first bishop of Antioch. *Jerome* says, that *Ignatius* was the first bishop after Peter. *Origen* says, that *Ignatius* was the second bishop at Antioch after Peter. And *Epephonius* says, that Paul and Peter were bishops of Rome. The quotations might be enlarged, but it is superfluous, as enough has been adduced to show us how exceedingly uncertain is proof from this source.\*

§54. 3. This source of proof is not to be relied upon as of itself satisfactory evidence; as there is scarcely any doctrine, opinion, or practice in the church, that has not been, or may not be, supported by this kind of testimony; to this source, the Roman Catholic, the Episcopalian, the Independent, the Anti-Pædobaptist, &c., resort for the defence of their several claims, and, apparently, with the same plausibility. This source of information is useful only as it *illustrates scripture doctrines*, clearly stated, or fairly deduced; but as an argument, in itself, it has little or no weight.

§55. 4. This mode of proof can not easily be made satisfactory to the plain, the unlearned reader.† If the former remarks are true, it is evident that the unlearned can not be convinced by this kind of argument, beyond his own knowledge of history, or the confidence he may have in the fidelity and candor of the reasoner; conviction is put beyond his power, as the authorities are mostly locked up in the dead languages, or only party extracts are given to subserve party purposes; so that without the means or ability to examine the original documents, he is left at the uncertain discretion of mere fancy. A quotation may be given fairly, but it may be mutilated, or placed in such an attitude as to convey a meaning different from that intended by the author, e. g.: The author of the "Deacon,"‡ in pleading for the three distinct offices of bishop, elder, and deacon, in the Presbyterian church, quotes from *Tertullian*, *Presbyter of Carthage* in the second century, in his epistle to the *Philadelphians*, in which he, *Tertullian*, states, the church—"especially if they are at unity with the *bishop*, and *elders*, and *deacons*," &c. Again. "One bishop, together with his eldership and the deacons." Again. "Attend to the *bishop*, to the *eldership*, and to the *deacons*." Similar quotations are made from the apostolic canons,|| and hence

\* *Dwight's Ser.* 151.

† See Appendix, note 2.

‡ THE DEACON, pp. 9, 10.

|| Can. 27, 42, 44.

he infers that the temporal diaconate is a Divine institution. All these quotations, in the manner of their introduction, are calculated to make a false impression. It is precisely the language of episcopacy, and is used by them to establish their three ministerial orders. They claim these three orders, and no other, of Divine warrant; their own language is, "These permanent officers are of three ranks or grades: Apostles, presbyters, (elders\*) and *deacons*; and each are ministers in the church."†

§56. 5. *The authority of the Fathers is on many points, discordant, indefinite, and ambiguous, e. g.:* The question relative to the subjects and mode of baptism, can not be settled by arguments drawn hence: they appear nearly equally plausible on each side. Nor is their testimony more satisfactory, when they refer to the office and functions of the deacon. Two quotations will be sufficient to illustrate this particular. Tertullian, before quoted, writes thus: "The high priest, i. e. the bishop, hath the right of giving baptism; after him, the *presbyters* and *deacons*."‡ Now, hear him in another place. One, is bishop to-day; another, to-morrow; to-day, he is deacon, who is reader to-morrow; to-day, a presbyter, who is a layman to-morrow; for they also bestow sacerdotal functions on the laity."§ We willingly admit that the learned, who have access to the original authorities, may satisfactorily reconcile apparent discrepancies; but the unlearned, for whom we write, can draw no correct estimate of proofs derived from this source, beyond their confidence in the veracity and honesty of those who resort to this mode of argumentation. The authority is very ambiguous, and of course, not to be relied on when the same authors, and even the same quotations, prove both episcopacy and presbyterianism.

§57. 6. *The authority of the Fathers proves too much.* The very same kind of authority that proves the existence of deacons, proves the existence of another class of officers, which will not be admitted by the advocates of modern deaconism, to wit: *deaconesses*. It would appear from the Fathers, that there existed in the days of the apostles, such an order, to which reference is made by the apostle: "Phebe, a deaconess (*diakonos*), of the church which is at Cenchrea."§ In the apostolic canons, as early, according to some, as the first century, according to others, in the fourth century, an account is given of the particular mode of ordaining deaconesses, by the *imposition of hands*, and the prayer used on the occasion.¶ This order continued in the Latin church till the tenth or eleventh, and in the Greek church, till the twelfth century, when it ceased. One of the special reasons alleged for this order was, to attend to females at the time of their baptism—of course, by immersion. The authority thus quoted to prove *deacons*, equally proves *deaconesses*, and baptism, by immersion.

§58. Now, allowing these authorities—the Fathers—the utmost credit, what do they prove? Nothing, in favor of a temporal deacon. They prove the existence of an office-bearer, called deacon, but

\* Acts 14: 23.

† Chapin's View; and other Episcopalian writers.

‡ De

Rap. c. 17. § Op. vol. 2, p. 39.

§ Rom. 16: 1. Clark in loco.

¶ Lib. 8.

chaps. 19, 20. See also, Broughton's Dic., word "*deaconess*."

to him, some attribute the functions of pastor; others, those of the ruling elder;\* but none ascribe to the deacon duties *exclusively temporal*. A few quotations will suffice. Of the class of duties belonging to pastor, Polycarp, of the first century;† Ignatius,‡ Justin Martyr,|| of the second century, Clement of Alexandria,§ of the second century, and Tertullian, all frequently mention *deacons* as ministers in the church; as the “ministers of God in Christ,”¶ as the “ministers of the mysteries of Christ.”\*\*\* Ignatius says, concerning deacons, “It is not lawful without the bishops, either to baptize, or to celebrate the holy communion.”†† Tertullian adds: “The highest priest, that is the bishop, hath the right of giving baptism; after him, the presbyters and deacons.”†† But this must suffice, to show the opinion of some of the ancients, who ascribe to the deacon *ministerial* functions.

§59. Let us attend to a few testimonies which ascribe to the *deacon* only the power which we attach to the *ruling elder*. All the ancients, without exception, speak of the deacon as being employed in distributing the elements of the Lord’s Supper, which is denied to them by modern diaconists, and which we have shown belongs to the ruling elder.|||| Justin Martyr says: “There is brought to him who presides over the brethren, bread, and a cup of water, and wine. And he who presides having given thanks, the whole assembly having expressed their assent, they, who among us are called deacons, (*διακονοι*,) distribute the bread, and the wine, and the water, to each of those who are present to partake of that which has been blessed.”§§ The very same sentiment is expressed by the same writer, in the 99th page of the above apology, when speaking of the dispensation of the Lord’s Supper.

§60. We might go on, but it is useless to swell the catalogue. These authorities prove nothing of themselves; nor do they clearly illustrate much, either for or against the subject under discussion. It is unequivocally certain, that when these Fathers spoke of bishop or bishops, elders and deacons, they are not to be understood as speaking of three distinct officers, in the sense that the advocates of the *modern* diaconate attach to their accounts; but of *two*, they distinctly speak, to wit: *bishops* and *presbyters*, or elders; the bishops being the presidents, (or *ἐπισκοποι*,) and elders, (or the *πρεσβυτεροι*,) his aids: with the deacons to attend to the poor, preach and baptize, according to the direction of the bishop.

§61. Before dismissing this part of our subject, it may be proper to adduce the testimony of some more modern divines. Let us hear the sentiment of Dr. Thomas Goodwin, one of the Westminster divines. In his “Church Order Explained,” he has the following: “What sort of bishops hath God set in his church?” Ans. “Two; some, pastors and teachers; some, ruling elders under two heads; some, labor in word and doctrine; and of these, some are pastors, some, teachers; others, *rule only*, and labor not in word and doctrine,”

\* Chapin, p. 149, sec. 5. † Ep. Phil. 5. ‡ Ep. Eph. c. 2. Ep. Mag. cc. 2, 6, 13. Ep. Trall. cc. 2, 3, 7. Ep. Phil. cc. 4, 7, 10, &c. § Apol. 1, cc. 85, 87. § Strom. 8, p. 667. ¶ Pol. Ep. Phil. c. 7. \*\* Ep. Mag. c. 6. †† Ep. Smyr. c. 8. ‡‡ De Bap. c. 17. §§ See sec. 21. ¶¶ Apol. p. 97.

&c.\* Messrs. Bridge, Burroughs, and Nye, members of the same assembly, whose opinions are particularly recorded, concur in the same opinion.

§62. Drs. Gill and Scott, with Messrs. Guise, Henry, and others, all concur in this sentiment, that there were but two offices in the church." "The deacons," says Gill, on Phil. 1: 1, "were such as served tables, the Lord's table, the minister's table, and the poor's table, &c.; there being no other offices, nor officers of Divine institution, but *pastors* and *deacons*; whatever else is introduced, is without warrant, and comes from the man of sin." Henry says: "These (*bishops* and *deacons*,) were all the officers which were known in the church, and which were of Divine appointment." But it is useless to multiply authorities.

§63. Let us now attend to the

IVth. Branch of our investigation, and consider the arguments that may be advanced against the office of deacon, as a mere temporal servant.

§64. 1. *The silence of scripture on the subject.* If such an office existed, as distinct from the bishop and ruling elder, it is passing strange that we have no account, in the whole New Testament, of the ordination of a single *deacon* in the church. It has been shown, that no passage of scripture distinctly refers to such an office except Phil. 1: 1, and Tim. 3: 8—12, and even these have no other evidence of such a reference than the word *διακονος*, which is translated *deacon*, but might as well have been rendered *minister*, *attendant*, or *servant*; or, as regards the fact, ruling elder. Nor are there any scriptures that point out, or define the duties and limits of the office. True, there are qualifications required for the office-holder, that Paul, in his epistle to Timothy, calls *deacon*, but it has been made appear† that these qualifications belong to the ruling elder: or, if you deny them to him, we must assert that they belong to the deacon, in the Episcopalian sense, as an inferior order of the clergy—as evangelists, such as the seven were. But, as all Presbyterians deny the latter application, and as there is scarcely a qualification that would be expected in a temporal office, such as that of deacon, contended for, we conclude that the application of the passage belongs to the ruling elder. The apostles and evangelists *ordained elders* in every city;‡ but no where is it said, they ordained deacons. How can we account for the silence, or, at least, ambiguity and obscurity of the scriptures, on a point so important? Such ambiguity and obscurity do not obtain relative to the office of the pastor and ruling elder: their qualifications, ordination, existence, and meeting in ecclesiastical assemblies, and publishing their proceedings to the world, are recorded,|| but nothing such, relative to deacons, unless it appear in a few forced expositions, and misapplied scriptures. These considerations should lead the serious inquirer to be cautious in claiming a Divine institution for an office, whose existence has such a feeble scriptural light to point it out.

\* Op. vol. 4. pp. 16, 19, 22.

|| Acts 15: 6. 16: 4. 20: 17.

† Sec. 37.

‡ Tit. 1: 5, et al. freq.

§65: 2. A view of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, appears to be unfavorable to the existence of church officers, of a merely temporal nature. He expressly declares, that his "Kingdom is not of this world."\* His church, though in the world, is not of it—it is spiritual in its institution, law, officers, ordinances and end: Our Lord, when appealed to in case of a dispute in worldly matters, peremptorily declined to interfere, saying, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?"† plainly intimating, that the object of his mission was not to interfere in temporal affairs, for which laws had long since been given in the New Testament scripture; but his mission contemplated spiritual things according to the declared character of his kingdom.

§66. In sending forth his disciples, the Lord Jesus is careful to admonish them to "provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in their purses, nor scrip for their journey; for the workman is worthy of his meat."‡ Now, it is a remarkable fact, that though our Redeemer|| and his apostles both concur in declaring that the gospel shall be supported,§ yet it is no where said how it is to be supported, but is left, both as regards the manner and amount, to the influence of the gospel on men's hearts. ¶ "When I sent you," says Christ to his disciples, "without purse, or scrip, or shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said nothing."¶ As their day, so shall their supply be. When more is needed, he will dispose to give more, as believers were disposed in the commencement of the gospel.\*\* The idea of church lands, or church revenues, whether these revenues be obtained from the rent of lands, or the civil treasurer, is alike repugnant to the genius of the gospel, and the interests of the church. This was the foundation of papal power, and is the natural bearing of consistorism. Though "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,"†† yet "the saints shall use it only as heirs."‡‡ Since, therefore, both Christ and his apostles have declared that the church shall be supported, but have not informed us how; and since neither has warranted any permanent ecclesiastical fund, it appears highly improbable, that a special, permanent officer should be ordained for merely temporal purposes, for the distribution of funds that might, or might not exist; especially, when the eldership, that is, the ministers and elders, have the charge of the poor committed to them.|||| 2

§67. 3. Another argument against the office of deacon, and which is closely allied to the last, is, *that it partakes of Erastianism*, or a blending of civil and religious matters. In the last argument, we have seen the care of the Redeemer, in keeping civil and religious things distinct. But, if a person, who is to be employed in merely temporal concerns, receives *spiritual* ordination to qualify him for the discharge of his *temporal* duties, or to attend "to the temporalities of

NOTE 1. The same may be said of the support of the civil magistrate.

NOTE 2. The argument derived from the Jewish policy, for the support of the church, savors more of worldly wisdom in carnal matters, than a dependence upon the Head of the church, for the supply of our wants.—Luke 16: 8.

\* John 18: 36.

† Luke 12: 14.

‡ Matt. 10: 9, 10.

|| Luke 10: 7.

§ Rom. 15: 27.

¶ 1 Cor. 9: 9, 10.

2 Tim. 2: 6.

¶ Luke 22: 35.

\*\* Acts 2: 45.

†† Ps. 24: 1.

‡‡ Ps. 25: 12.

|||| See sec. 20.

the Church," as it is called, it is surely uniting temporal with spiritual things. Much more might we require the civil magistrate, who has much weightier duties to perform, than those assigned to the deacon, to be ordained by a session, or presbytery. But who would not oppose such a prostitution of the right of ordination? We ask, is there not as much, if not more of spiritual responsibility, involved in the magistrate's functions, as those of the deacon? If ordination is only claimed as a guard to make the functionary more faithful, would not an oath have the same effect? But, we maintain, that to ordain an officer, whose whole duties are purely temporal, would be as great a prostitution of the sacred rite of ordination, as to employ it in setting apart the civil magistrate to his civil duties.

§68. Still further: for minister, elders, and deacons to sit in consistories, spiritual officers with temporal, to legislate about the temporalities of the church, her funds, the means of raising them, and how they are to be appropriated, is, to say the least, to descend from the dignity of spiritual rulers and overseers, to be employed, by virtue of their ordination, in carnal matters. If ministers have more regard for themselves, than for the doctrines of God's word, and the honor of their office—if they wish to aspire to the elevation of bishops, or cardinals, they would do well to plead for the consistory, as it is admirably calculated to assist aspirants, and to give them an insight into the pecuniary affairs of the church—an influence in fixing their own salaries, and to know who pays well, or ill. It is hoped, however, though the consistories afford these opportunities and others, more in advance of aspirancy than these, that there will be none so reckless of the doctrines of the Bible, and the honor of their profession as to avail themselves of the advantages offered. Nay, this very consideration, should induce every noble, independent mind, to turn his back upon a system of this kind; especially when he sees it has such slender claims upon his regards as being a Divine institution. No wonder Dr. Gill said, "Whatever else besides the two acknowledged standing officers introduced, is without a warrant, and comes from the man of sin."\*

§69. 4. *The testimony of the Fathers operates strongly against the office under consideration.* It is scarcely necessary to repeat here, the views of the Fathers, which have already been considered. Polycarp, the disciple of John, styles them "ministers of God in Christ."† Ignatius, "*ministers of the MYSTERIES OF JESUS CHRIST.*"‡ "I exhort your deacons, most dear to me, being entrusted with the *ministry of Jesus Christ,*"§ and to the Trallians, "Let all reverence the deacons." Again: "I salute your very worthy bishop; your venerable eldership; and your deacons, my fellow-servants."§ Here he puts the deacons upon an equality with himself; he calls them fellow-servants—he was a preacher. Justin Martyr says: "the deacons gave to each of those present, a portion of bread which had been blessed, and of wine mixed with water." Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, writes: "To my brethren, the elders and deacons,"¶

\* On Phil. 1: 1.  
§ Ep. Smyr.

† Ep. Phil. c. 7.  
¶ Ep. 29.

‡ Ep. Mag. c. 6.

§ Ep. Mag.



&c. &c. And a host of others speak the same sentiments. From the particularity and frequency of exhortations to *revere* and *honor* the deacons, as much as the bishops and elders, we are led to conclude, that these Fathers considered their office of a higher grade than mere money changers.

§70. Now, observe here, it is not denied, that there existed such a class of officers as is called deacons; but the question at issue is, with regard to the *nature* of this office. Our opponents say, it was *merely temporal*—employed “about the temporalities of the church;” we say, the characters referred to here, by the Fathers, were spiritual, who, with the bishop and elder, were employed about spiritual matters, but including temporalities, which, according to Episcopal notions, more properly belonged to deacons. Now, the authorities which we have quoted particularly, and the host which we have referred to, with our *and so forth*, view the office in two lights: The one class, takes the Episcopalian view, and attribute to him ministerial duties; of this fact the reader should be apprised, when he has such frequent quotations of “bishops, elders, and deacons,” multiplied before him, enough to dazzle his eye, but not enlighten his understanding; quotations from Episcopalian writers, ancient and modern, as well as from ancient Roman Catholics, who view the matter in this light. The other view in which the office is regarded in the quotations made and referred to, ascribes to the deacon the duties which we claim for the ruling elder—that of serving at the Lord’s Table, as well as watching over the poor, with the bishop, minister or pastor.\* In the former view, the quotations prove too much; we therefore reject that view; in the latter case, they prove enough; and this opinion, we feel safe in adopting as the scriptural sense. But yet, after all, we attach but indefinite importance to the proofs from this source, for either the one or the other.

§71. It is readily admitted, that in the later periods of the church, when error, innovation and carnal teachers, had, in a measure, departed from the pristine purity of her order and doctrines, that the officers originally ordained, were diverted from their primitive design; some, exalted to higher, and others, degraded to lower stations; and thus the office of elder and deacon, which originally were synonymous, come, in process of time, to embrace two distinct functions—one, *spiritual*, the other, *temporal*. The departure, in the ascending scale, was precisely similar; from the character of an humble pastor, or shepherd of the sheep, aspirants began to lord it over God’s heritage, by appointing bishops, archbishops, cardinal, &c.; for all which a Divine institution was pleaded, but with what reason, the foregoing arguments will shew.

§72. 5. *The office of deacons, beside the offices of pastor and ruling elder, is superfluous.* A redundancy of officers in the church, would mar that beauty and harmony which the apostle so highly commends: “Christ is the head; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth; according

\* Clemens Romanus recognizes, in his Ep. to Cor., but two grades of officers. See cc. 1, 42, 44, 47, and 54.

to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."\* But, if there is no Divine warrant for an ecclesiastical fund, and if it pertains to the duties of the pastor and ruling elder, to take care of the poor, the appointment of deacon, is superfluous; unless it be supposed, that the fact of *inferiority* of office and *ordination*, inspire with greater zeal and diligence in the performance of duty; but even that, would not justify a redundancy of office. If the cares of the church increase, it is as easy to increase the number of ruling elders, as to ordain deacons. To make the very best of it, since it is obvious that we have no clear Divine command, nor fair inference to warrant the office, it appears to dignify small, and to degrade sacred matters too much, to appoint such an officer, when all that is contended for in the office, can be performed by the two officers of acknowledged institution—pastors and ruling elders.

§73. 6. *The disagreement of authors*, with regard to the extent of the deacon's office, operates powerfully against the presumption, that it is a Divine institution. Unity of opinion goes far to prove the reality of the object about which the opinion is formed; and the contrary—diversity of sentiment—proves that the subject is imperfectly apprehended, or that it is not founded in truth. Now, it is a fact, that scarcely any two authors, ancient or modern, agree in limiting or defining the nature and extent of the deacon's office. No such discrepancy obtains relative to the teaching and ruling elder's office. Let us advert to a few examples:

I.—The Second Book of Discipline, limits their office to "the collection and distribution of the alms of the faithful, and ecclesiastical goods."†

II.—Stewart's Collection: the duties are—

1. To inform the Session of the poor in the congregation.
2. To collect and receive a supply for the poor.
3. To deliver the money received to the Session.
4. To take care of orphans and idiots.
5. To inform Session of the sick.
6. To collect the church's revenues—the minister's salary, and pay it to him.
7. TO PROVIDE THE ELEMENTS AND SERVE THE COMMUNICANTS AT THE LORD'S TABLE!!!

III.—Confession of Faith. "To take special care in distributing to the necessities of the saints."||

IV.—Dr. McLeod. "To manage the funds, inspect the state, and serve at the tables of the poor."§

V.—Reformation Principles. "The deacon has no power, except about the temporalities of the church."¶

VI.—The Book of Government and Discipline of the Ref. Pres. Church of Scotland, HAS NEITHER THE WORD DEACON, NOR A RECOGNITION OF THE OFFICE IN IT.\*\*

NOTE. 1. A ludicrous circumstance, perhaps in conformity to this practice, occurred within the author's knowledge. He was aiding at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, where there was a deacon. When the communicants had all been served, the deacon stepped forward, with all imaginable official dignity, and "served at the Table of the Lord," by removing the table linens!!

\* Eph. 4: 16. † Chap. 8. ‡ Tit. 8. || Form Ch. Gov. on Deacon.  
§ Ecc. Cat. Ques. 75. ¶ Chap. 22, sec. 3. Also, Scottish Test., chap. 11, sec. 11.  
\*\* See Appendix, note 1.

VII.—Knox, and the First Book of Discipline, maintain, that the office was permanent, but that the office bearer should be changed every year ; as also that of ruling elder. And they practised accordingly. 1

§74. Now, why all this diversity ? Ans. Because, the scriptures have not designated the extent of the office ; and every one has shaped his opinion according to convenience, fancy, or interest. When men leave the true light, or attempt to walk without a light, they are liable to cross each other's paths, and stumble, and fall. There is no just reason for dropping the seventh duty of Stewart's Collections, which was actually the practice in former days, unless it be a tacit confession, that the functions of the office are, by corruption, changed from what they had been in purer times.

§75. 7. *The faithfulness of the martyrs* strengthens our argument, that the office, in their opinion, was not of Divine appointment. Those godly, intelligent, and devoted men made the word of God their study, by day and by night. They understood its import, and shaped their lives by its precepts. They were not afraid to utter, or to publish their opinions before the face of their enemies, and within view of the engines of torture. No sin of omission, nor of commission, in church or state, passed unnoticed, or unmourned for. They testified against *all sins*. Their own observation, in reference to the truths and doctrines of God's word, was, "that they would leave neither a hair nor a hoof of God's word behind." Now, it does not appear from any records, that there was any such office bearer among them, as that of *deacon* ; 2 and yet, if it is a permanent office of Divine institution, it was a sin to let it fall into desuetude ; or, if it had fallen into desuetude, and they viewed the office as permanent and Divine ; they must have been conscious of their sin, and if so, our high opinion of their piety and zeal, leads us to believe they would have left their testimony against the evil, among themselves and others. But, as no such testimony is extant, we have strong reason to conclude, that they did not consider the office as of essential importance to the well-being of the Reformed Church. What gives greater force to this remark, is the fact—

§76. 8. *That the office has continued in a state of disuse, or neglect, from that day to this.* It does not appear, that the office of a deacon, as a temporal functionary, has existed in any department of the Presbyterian church, from that day to the present. The only evidence to the contrary, is the word *deacon*, contained in our books, and a few indirect allusions to the office. In the synod of Ulster, in Ireland, it is not found ; in the different branches of the Secession church, in Scotland and Ireland, it is not ; nor is it found in the Reformed Presbyterian church, in any of those kingdoms. As before observed, the Scottish Reformed Presbyterian church has not even the name in their "Book of Government and Discipline," and there is but a

NOTE. 1. "THE DEACON" admits this fact of discrepancy, p. 21, c. 2.

NOTE 2. We do not deny the existence of *solitary cases* ; but they were so rare, that it gives the greater weight to our argument.

passing allusion to it in her "Testimony."<sup>1</sup> The same may be said, generally, of all of the Presbyterian churches of America. There may be solitary exceptions, but if they are, these exceptions show that the general opinion of the learned and good, is unfavorable to deacons. And even the injunction of the General Assembly of 1840, or '41, directing the ordination of deacons in all their congregations, is but tardily complied with.

§77. Nor was ever the office thought of in America, in the Reformed Presbyterian church, till an attempt to have a congregation incorporated, suggested the ordination of deacons to constitute a consistory, thereby to be covered by the "Act to incorporate the Reformed Dutch church, in the State of New-York." Is it not exceedingly strange, that an institution, as some would make us believe, so plainly held forth in the scriptures, should have been neglected, nay, repudiated, by men so pious, so intelligent, and so faithful, from the days of the martyrs, till its introduction in the State of New-York? It can be accounted for in no other way, than by charging it to wilful, and of course, sinful neglect; or, to a doubt of the Divine institution of the office, as a part of the remains of popery, as it really is.

§78. These arguments, of themselves, are not presumed to be conclusive; but, taken in connection with the absence of proof for the office, from those sources from which proof is sought, we think they furnish as strong evidence as the case will admit, and leave conviction on the mind of the candid and unprejudiced reader, that the office pleaded for, is only a degraded state of the ruling elder, and instead of being pressed into the church, as a Divine institution, it ought to be discarded, and the officer raised to his proper standing; because, it wants such proof to establish its claims, as can be satisfactory to the great mass of Christians, who ought to be instructed in the doctrines of the Bible, and not led, hood-winked, into error, to embrace, as a *Divine institution*, "a money-making engine."

NOTE 1. "The deacons are ordained, upon the choice of the congregation, and are associated with the teaching and ruling elders, in distributing to the necessities of the poor, and managing other temporalities in the church."—*Proofs*: 1 Tim. 3: 8. Phil. 1: 1. Acts 6: 2, 3. Test. c. 11, sec. 11.

#### CHAPTER IV.—OBJECTIONS.

It only remains to consider the objections that appear to operate against the views and reasoning presented in the preceding pages.

§79. 1. *Objection.*—"The denial of the Divine institution of the deacon's office, as a temporal officer, is opposed to the opinion of Calvin and other early reformers."

*Answer* 1.—Calvin's authority proves nothing, in the absence of, or in opposition, to a "more sure word of testimony." He was but a man, and his opinions, like other men's, are to be received as they accord with the word of God. We are sometimes disposed to attach too great importance to the opinions of men, especially when they fall in with our own views; and to neglect too much the proper source of information—the scriptures. But let Calvin have all the credit he is entitled to, and that is not a little: Let us,

§80. 2. In the second place, observe the awful effects of deacons and consistory, which Calvin deplores, as existing in his day. "The deacon, who was steward for the poor, received what was given, in order to distribute it. Of the alms given at present, no more reaches the poor, than if they were thrown into the sea. This false appearance of deaconship, therefore, is a mockery of the church."\* This may be called an abuse of the office. But,

§81. 3. Let us attend to his account of the office which he seems to approve, and learn his opinion: "Nor was the situation of deacons at that time at all different from what it had been, under the apostles. For, they received the daily contributions of the faithful, and the annual revenues of the church, to apply them to their proper uses, that is: to distribute part to the ministers, and part to the support of the poor; subject, however, to the authority of the bishop, to whom they also rendered an account of their administration every year." "Archdeacons were first erected *when the extent of property required a new and more accurate mode of administration.* In their hands, was placed the amount of the annual revenues of the possessions," &c. &c. "Their appointment, *to read the gospel, to exhort the people to pray, and their admission to the administration of the cup in the Sacred Supper,* were intended to dignify their office, that they might discharge it with more piety, in consequence of being admonished by such ceremonies, that they were not executing some profane stewardship, but that their function was spiritual, and dedicated to God."†

§82. In these quotations, which might be extended, two facts are evident: The great abuses to which the deacons in consistory gave facilities; and, that the deacons were admitted *to distribute the elements at the Lord's Supper.* This proves too much; and, consequently, condemns the whole probation drawn from this authority. If the

\* Lib 4, chap. 5, sec. 15.

† Lib. 4, chap 4, sec. 5.

deacons, "at this time, did not differ from what they were under the apostles, as temporal officers," *they took too much upon them*; in which we have another instance of the confounding of the deacon's functions, with those of the ruling elder; whose duties were really one and the same, in the apostles' days, and continued so, until aspirants began to corrupt the order of the gospel church.

§83. *Obj.* 2.—We are told that "Melville, and other of the reformers, together with the last martyr, James Renwick; the former, had deacons, and the latter was about to ordain them, but 'probably' did not, on account of his untimely death."

*Ans.*—This proves nothing; it only shows us the opinions of those great and good men. But we have seen, that as great and good men before them had erred, and so may *they* have erred, likewise. 1 The fact, that men are great and excellent, in some things, does not prove that they are so in every point. It is not certain, that Mr. Renwick's mode of obtaining ordination is altogether justifiable; the necessity of the case, is pleaded as an extenuation. So be it; the like would be condemned now, under any circumstance; it has been condemned in a similar case, in the history of the American church. But, the very fact of Mr. Renwick's ordination by the Dutch church, at Groningen, no doubt, may have given him a predilection for the Dutch forms of deacons and consistory. Whether this is the case or not, if Mr. Renwick had recorded it with his last drop of blood, and proclaimed it with his dying breath, that a consistory *was a Divine institution*, it would not prove what the scriptures neither prove nor imply, and must, with all deference to the memory of the last martyr, be ascribed to the "hay, wood and stubble" of human frailty. Names, prove nothing; especially, on a subject that is without previous proof.

§84. *Obj.* 3.—"The rejection of the deacon, in the modern sense, is a contradiction of our standards, in the 'Form of Church Government, and Directory for Worship,' in our 'Confession of Faith,' and 'Reformation Principles,' which we have solemnly sworn to maintain."

*Ans.* 1.—This is, indeed, a weighty objection, and claims a candid consideration. And, in replying, let it be observed, that an oath, whose matter is immoral, or which involves a contradiction, or absurdity, cannot bind the conscience. If, for a moment, it be admitted, that it did, it might place the swearer beyond obligation to God's law altogether; for, he could swear to neglect the Divine law, or to violate it; and, if such an oath bound the conscience, he would be freed from obligation. Now, as these documents are but mere human compilations, professing to be "founded on, and agreeable to, the word of God," if any part is found to be contrary to, or inconsistent with, that word, it cannot bind the conscience. 2

NOTE 1. The Second Book of Discipline considers deacons, as "*spiritual officers*."—Chap. 8, verse 5.

NOTE 2. In the historical part of the "Scottish Testimony," we have the following very just and appropriate remarks, in a foot note, which help to diminish the weight of this objection: "The formula of questions proposed to ministers at their ordination, in the Reformed Presbyterian church, requires of them an acknowledgment of the acts of assembly, between 1638 and 1649, *ratifying and approving the Reformation*;

§85. 2. But, in the terms of communion in the Reformed Presbyterian church, in North America, we engage "to the form of church government and manner of worship," only "as they were received by the Church of Scotland." 1 Thus far, then, we are bound, and no farther. To ascertain the extent of the obligation, we have only to inquire how the Church of Scotland received these documents upon the subject. We have already seen, by their uniform practice, from the year 1648, till the present day, that they received it with this exception—they *had no deacon*. Their *practice*, which was fully known by the compilers of these terms, limits the extent of obligation. If the Church of Scotland had *deacons*, or, if they had acknowledged the sin of not having them, then we might expect the obligation extended farther. But, neither of these exists, and therefore, the obligation is bounded by their *known practice*—which *excludes deacons*.

§86. 3. The above remarks will appear to have the greater weight when we observe, that the very same documents contain enactments that never were, and never could be, acknowledged by that church, as of Divine warrant, and, therefore, their practice uniformly condemned them.

§87. (1.) "The ordinary officers of the church," says, the Form of Church Government, "are pastors, teachers, or doctors, and other church governors, and deacons." Here, a teacher or doctors, is exhibited as different from, and, as some in our day would have it, superior to, the pastor;\* but this office was not then, nor has it since been, admitted as a distinct office from the pastor. The teacher and pastor are the same, but engaged in different departments of pastoral, or ministerial duties. 2

§88. (2.) In the "Directory for Public Worship," under the head of "Baptism," provision is made for the admission of *sponsors*; the words are: "The child to be baptized, after notice given to the minister the day before, is to be presented by the father, or, (in case of his necessary absence,) *by some Christian friend, in his place*, professing his earnest desire, that the child may be baptised." Reformers never admitted this; and they never will, while they continue faithful to their testimony. This, too, is embraced in the documents, sworn to only, "as they were received by the Church of Scotland."

§89. (3.) Under the head of "Marriage"—it was to be "solemn-

but this is not understood by the Church in Scotland, as *implying* an *unqualified* approbation of these acts individually." "We would not be understood as regarding the proceedings of either church or state, during the reforming period, as free from blemish."—*Glasgow ed.* 1839, p. 105. And their adoption of a new "Book of Government and Discipline," proves the same thing—the error, defect, or imperfection of the documents whose place is designed to be occupied by these instruments.

NOTE 1. The Scottish Terms make no reference to the form of church government, and manner of worship. Their Terms, relative to this subject, are:

"2. The acknowledgement of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, larger and shorter, to be founded upon, and agreeable to, the word of God."

"3. The owning of the Divine right, and original, of Presbyterian church government."

NOTE 2. The office of doctor, as distinct from that of pastor or bishop, is omitted in the Scottish and American Testimonies.

\* See also, Second Book of Discipline, chap. 5.

ined in the *place appointed for public worship*, at any time of the year, except on a day of public humiliation. And we *advise* that it be not on the *Lord's day*." Neither did the Church of Scotland avail herself of this privilege by her practice, and yet it is a part of these documents we have sworn to maintain.

§90. (4.) In the directions for family worship, it is granted "to persons of quality to entertain one approved by the presbytery, for *performing family exercise*." Nor, was this practised by the Church of Scotland, though it is in the documents to which we have plighted our faith, and which has not yet been rescinded.

§91. It is evident, from these quotations, (and we might have added the section on "deacons,") that though these documents were adopted as a means of "greater uniformity in the doctrine, government, discipline and worship of the church," yet there were things tacitly acknowledged, and practically proved to be unacceptable to pure Presbyterians. 1 The rejection of deacons, therefore, involves in it no breach of vows, as provisions are made in the term referred to, which requires us to maintain only those doctrines that are purely of scriptural authority, "as received by the Church of Scotland." If it be still maintained, that the rejection of deacons is a breach of vows, we reply, so also, is the rejection of the four last items enumerated, a four-fold breach of vows.

§92. As it respects the part of the objection taken from "Reformation Principles,"\* it is of easy disposition. The fact of the single notice, "The deacon has no power, except about the temporalities of the church;" and while, in the *errors* testified against, there is a testimony against the *want of ruling elders*, but none against the *want of deacons*; and yet, at the time this document was adopted, there was not a *deacon* in the Reformed Presbyterian church, any where, shows us in what an indifferent, if not doubtful, light the office was viewed by the authority which adopted that document. In the same manner, is the subject passed over in the "Form of Church Government" in the Confession of Faith, insinuating either, that this subject, now so difficult to be proved, was then clearly understood by every one; or, which is more probable, that it was so doubtful of proof, that the less said on it, for fear of committal, would be the wiser course; especially, with a view to "greater uniformity."

§93. If, after all, these explanations should not be satisfactory to some tender and tenacious individuals, whose scruples we regard, and would, therefore, treat tenderly, let it be still borne in mind, that the compilations are only human; and if, on candid examination, they are found to embrace error, or sentiments at variance with the

NOTE 1. In the acts adopting these documents, now under consideration, there is not a solitary exception made to the instruments as they now appear, except one in the directions for the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, where it is provided: "That the clause, which mentioneth the communicants sitting about the table, or at it, be not interpreted, as if, in the judgment of this kirk, it were indifferent, and free for any of the communicants not to come to, or receive at, the table; or, as if we did approve the distributing of the elements by the minister to each, and not by the communicants among themselves."—*Act Gen. Ass., Feb. 3, 1645.*

\* Chap. 22, sec. 3.



scriptures, our oath to maintain them, is not, can not, be obligatory. This consideration is the more worthy of regard, from the facts, that the Confession of Faith itself admits, that "The purest churches under heaven, are subject, both to mixture and error;"\*—and the Reformed Church in Scotland, has adopted a new book of Government and Discipline; and the same church in America, is laboring to do the same, admitting clearly the *error* or *imperfection* of the documents on which we have been animadverting; because, if these documents are correct, the adoption of others in their place, would be criminal-ly superfluous.

§94. *Obj.* 4.—"If we reject deacons, what will those congregations do, who have got deacons, and whose incorporations are predicated upon their existence—pastors, elders and deacons?" 1

*Ans.* 1.—Let those "who use the office of a deacon well, and who have purchased to themselves a good degree," receive their reward by being ordained ruling elders, who will be found just as faithful to the trust committed to them when elders, as when deacons, and who, in their elevation, will feel themselves as much bound to diligence; which arrangement will not burden the session, as in this case, it will have received an accession to its number, equal to its increased responsibility.

§95. 2. Let them use the proper means for amending their charters for which the law makes provisions, and let them become incorporated under the statutes for the incorporation of ecclesiastical bodies, which involves no homologation of the United States' Constitution,—is equally applicable to aliens as citizens, and thus all those congregations, which have deacons and consistory, and incorporations predicated thereon, can honorably and righteously escape from an Erastian and semi-popish order, to the primitive simplicity and order of the church of Christ in the apostles' days.†

§96. *Obj.* 5.—"But, in case of the rejection of deacons, what will we do? Your trustees or committee-men, are an acknowledgment of the necessity of deacons; trustees are an innovation—are *unscriptural* and *anti-scriptural*."

*Ans.* 1.—The reasoning of the foregoing pages, has sufficiently shown, that the Glorious Head of the Church never did ordain, or give authority to ordain, a class of men to be employed about temporalities alone. Did it satisfactorily appear, that such an order had been instituted, with a specification of their duties, then we would oppose "substitutes," as trustees are called. We maintain, that the proper functions of the scriptural deacon, are those of the ruling elder, because, he is such in fact, for which we admit no "substitutes." The objection inquires, "What will we do without deacons?" We have already said, enlarge the session.

§97. 2. Trustees, or committee-men, are not considered as church officers, any more than the precentor, the grave-digger, the bell-

NOTE 1. The whole burden of objection to the trustee system, urged by the author of "THE DEACON," seems to be, that it is not a good "money-making engine." See "THE DEACON," pp. 40—54. In these pages, the complaint is reiterated between fifteen and twenty times.

\* Chap. 25, sec. 5.

† See Appendix, note 3.

ringer, or the wood-sawyer. And, if it be maintained, that men should be ordained to handle money, by collecting and disbursing it, as well might we plead that every person employed about the church, from the brick-maker to the painter, from the theological professor, down to the trustee for erecting a theological edifice, and for managing the fiscal concerns of a theological seminary, should be all ordained, lest they "build with untempered mortar." The presumption, that it requires ordained men to manage the fiscal concerns of the church, has its origin in popery, which dignifies every thing with ordination, or some equivalent rite. It is not easy to see the difference that the author of "The Deacon," makes between the trustees of a congregation, and those of a theological seminary. "By boards of trustees," says he, in his opposition to unordained trustees in the church, "is not meant those boards which, acting under the direction of ecclesiastical judicatories in the management of church funds, such as those appropriated for theological seminaries, are likewise incorporated,"\* &c. Now, as a board of trustees, or committee-men of a congregation, incorporated, or not, are as much under the direction of an ecclesiastical judicatory—the session, as the trustees of a theological seminary, where is the difference? They are each unordained boards, each entrusted with money dedicated to religious uses, and each subject to the direction and control of an "ecclesiastical judicatory." If the one is an "innovation, unscriptural and anti-scriptural," so is the other. They are precisely equal, and if equals be added to, subtracted from, or divided by, equals; the result is the same—equal. There may be a reason for the supposed difference, but it does not appear in the different character of the boards.

§98. All the flourish that is made about trustees being an "innovation, unscriptural, and anti-scriptural," will, therefore, go for what it is worth; it may please those who are seeking preferment, but can not convince any one.† Especially, as no Divine right is claimed for trustees; nor are they substituted for any appropriate ecclesiastical functionary; for there is none appointed by Divine authority to do what they are appointed, by the consent of the brethren, to perform. The comparison between the substitution of trustees and human psalmody, is illogical—absolutely puerile.‡ Trustees occupy the place of no Divine institution, but human psalmody does. The eldership, i. e., the session, is the proper depository and distributors of the poor's fund. Pew-rents, subscription, &c., being properly the concern of the congregation, as a civil, not a spiritual association, but devoted to religious purposes, may be disposed of by them as they think proper, provided, the money, in all cases, be appropriated to the object for which it was raised. Such reasoning as that which we oppose, shows plainly the desperate nature of the cause it is employed to defend—a cause that depends more upon the dubious testimony of obscure times, and tact, in argument, than upon scripture testimony and legitimate inference.

§99. *Obj. 6.*—"If the deacon is not an officer to take care of the

\* Page 42, note.

† See Appendix, note 4.

‡ "THE DEACON, p. 43.

poor, collect and distribute all the contributions for ecclesiastical purposes, then, in a very remarkable manner, has this whole matter been overlooked by the Head of the church. What becomes of the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger Catechism, Question 191, which says, that 'the church should be *maintained* by the civil magistrate?' " \*

*Ans. 1.*—We can see nothing like "overlooking," in the case, any more than it is an "overlooking," not to have directed the ordination of a precentor, sexton, school-master, or the *trustees of a theological seminary*; the last of which is pleaded for by the objector. The duties of these persons are certainly as much connected with the spiritual welfare of the church, as those claimed for the deacon, and some of them, much more so. If the *importance* of the subject constitutes the "overlooking," in the one case, so must it in the other; for the cases alleged, are as important as the case the objector supposes. But, there is no "overlooking" in the matter, as provisions are made in the offices of the pastor and ruling elder, to take care of the poor, not as members of the civil community; but as invalids, or impotents of this holy brotherhood—the church. 1

§100. 2. In reply to the second part of the objection, from the Confession of Faith, and Larger Catechism, Question 191, let it be observed, first, that as no reference is made to the Confession where the allusion is to be found, and as such a "maintenance" as is claimed, does not appear in that instrument, we let that part of the allegation pass. And, secondly; by a reference to the scripture quoted under question 191, it is evident, that it is not *pecuniary*, but magistral and parental maintenance that is there held forth. Reader, judge for yourself: "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."† Not a word is there here about *pecuniary* "maintenance." How easy it is to make an assertion; but it is not so easy to support it. Nay, the strongest scriptures, that *seem* to favor the view of the objector, do not justify the conclusion, that pecuniary support is intended. The civil magistrate is bound to support the church by the civil sword, if necessary; by his magistral influence in suppressing vice, and affording facilities to the church's welfare, by removing obstacles out of the way; but no more. He may offer gifts;‡ but we have no just reason to expect a state revenue secured to the church from the civil coffers.

NOTE 1. The London divines, in their *DIVINE RIGHT OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT*, have, in the appendix, an essay on the *Divine right of church sessions, presbyteries and synods*; but no attempt do they make to establish the Divine right of *consistories* of pastors, ruling elders and deacons. In their estimation, such a consistory has no Divine right; its highest claim, therefore, must be—*human*.

\* "THE DEACON," pp. 22, 24, 45.

† 1 Tim. 2: 1, 2.

‡ Ps. 73: 10.



## CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

THUS have we, candid reader, endeavored to set before you, in as plain and perspicuous a point of view as we are capable in so small a compass, what appears to us, to be the unstrained and obvious language of the scriptures, and of the approved practice of our Fathers in the purest times of the Reformation, upon this agitated subject. We wish to introduce into the church no new doctrine, nor any innovation; and, as far be it from us, to oppose any scriptural order, or practice, appointed by the church's Head, and approved by his faithful followers. But, as we do not presume, that the church is yet in a state of perfection,\* important doctrines may yet be, in a measure, overlooked or undervalued, which, in time, may claim a greater regard than is now bestowed upon them; so, too, there may be fragments of ancient superstition lying concealed in our ecclesiastical garments, as they were attached to Calvin, Knox and others, just emerging from the darkness and prepossessions of popery, which may have been tolerated for peace's sake, or to attain to a nearer approximation to "uniformity;" and which may have been winked at, or allowed to exist merely in *name*, but not in practice; and this toleration has been, by those removed from that period and those men, construed into *approbation*. It does not follow, that we, as defenders of the "faith once delivered to the saints," must espouse every sentiment, uttered, published, or recorded, by them, unless their sentiments are found in accordance with the unerring rule.† In this investigation, we have aimed at truth—have written for the plain reader, who has not the means of testing the force of arguments drawn from the Fathers, or from the dead languages; nor have we disregarded the learned reader; for him, we have made quotations from authors, and the original, that he may see our faithfulness in the references.

Much authority that intervenes between the third century and the second Reformation, has been almost entirely passed over, for two reasons: first, had we critically examined all the authorities that present themselves, it would have swelled this pamphlet—already enlarged beyond the bounds first proposed—to a large volume: and, secondly, the authority of that period is so vastly obscure, dark, equivocal, and contradictory, that it would require more than a *virtuoso* to make the testimony credible to the unlearned reader; or even, if we could make it intelligible, the very same authorities might be quoted by an opponent to contradict the testimony that we have adduced, with a caution, by way of admonition, not to place entire confidence in the opinions of the Fathers, when the scriptures are silent, dark, or doubtful.

For similar reasons, have we also omitted many names of the Reformers, that have been adduced on the subject; even their testi-

\* See West. Con. Faith, chap. 25, sec. 5.

† See note, page 38.

mony, without the clear teachings of the scriptures, is not to be relied on. Having so lately escaped from the darkness and superstitions of popery, it is not to be expected, that they would be entirely free from the influence of their opinions. Witness Luther, on consubstantiation; and the early form of church government, modeled, in a measure, and still retained in the Dutch church, after the popish form. Calvin derived his views from the Bohemians. Knox, and his successors, down to the second Reformation, maintained the expediency, and carried it out in practice, to ordain both ruling elders and deacons yearly; so, while they advocated the permanency of the office, abstractly, they asserted the *temporary* nature of the officer. For these, and other reasons, we have omitted this class of witnesses; and have derived our conclusions, mainly, from the teachings of the word of God, and the approved practice of the purest churches for two hundred years.

Let us, then, in reviewing the argument, examine, not for the sake of victory, but for the discovery of truth, relative to this litigated question. Let the candid Christian, not only look back at the argument brought forward, and the evils that consistories have produced, but let him look around at the incipient evils already produced by the system in the Reformed Church; and "these are but the beginning of sorrows." 1 It was declared by one who is yet living, "*that consistory was an admirable engine to raise money;*" and he who first introduced deacons into the American church, said, "he deeply regretted their introduction; and, if called to do the same again, he would keep his hands clear of the matter." 2 Look forward; popery acquired strength by the acquisition of wealth; she acquired wealth by the most plausible and sacred pretences, by the aids of those faithful self-denied stewards—the deacons. A regard for Divine institution was the imposing doctrine inculcated; and who dare suspect, or who can resist the claims of a Divine institution, for such holy purposes as to guard the church's revenues, funds and alms? The little stream that commenced on the mountain summit, which might have been turned with the hand, increased as it descended, and accumulated to a mighty torrent, which has carried all before it. Let the church remain as she has been since the days that deacons fell into desuetude, and she may still be as peaceful and prosperous in spiritual things, as she has been since 1648: but, admit the "money-making," and, we may add, the money-keeping engine, and, by and by, tithes may be assessed; church revenues will be acquired; clerical pride and luxury must be supported; the poor will be assessed, or taxed, or drained of money, to support the demands of the church. By degrees, the little rill will become a stream whose torrent a host can not resist.

If there is any truth, any plausibility in the reasoning of the fore-

NOTE 1. It is a fact that needs no proof, that the introduction of deacons, and the agitation of the deacon-question, have been productive of more division, disorder, and trouble in the church, than all new-lightism; and if the church is not allowed to pursue her former course, the end of these evils is not yet.

NOTE 2. The fact is, money, money, money, and minister's salary, under the cover of a Divine institution to take care of the poor, appear to be the very body, soul, and breath of the deacon-cause.

going pages, RULING ELDERS, who regard the importance and dignity of their office, will do well to oppose any encroachments made upon their rights, or the rights of free citizens of our Jerusalem, whose interests they are appointed to guard. MINISTERS, if their indirect aim is at aggrandizement, elevation and influence, may, with all imaginable piety, zeal, and self-denial, too, plead a *Divine right* for such an admirable engine. 1 But, we hope better things of them; if they are the meek and confiding disciples of the Redeemer, they will be willing to go at his bidding, withersoever he may call them, "without purse, or scrip;" trusting, like the apostle to the Gentiles, in their glorious Master, for a supply of their wants, temporal as well as spiritual; he feeds the ravens without any earthly revenue or consistory, for their supply; and "shall he not much more feed you, O ye of little faith," for time to come, as he has done for the last two hundred years! Committee-men, or trustees, never have arrogated to themselves power or pre-eminence, on account of their employment, but deacons have.

In fine, let the above arguments be duly weighed, without the preponderating influence of party spirit. If there is any part of the subject discussed, that is unfairly or falsely handled, or erroneously stated, and it be pointed out with a spirit of candor, the sophistry will be acknowledged, and the error retracted; but, until that is candidly and fairly done, and that in a manner which will be accessible to tests within reach of the great body of the people, who constitute *the church* and WHO ALWAYS HAVE MAINTAINED TRUTH, WHEN THEIR TEACHERS, IN THE PURSUIT OF POWER AND AGGRANDIZEMENT, EGREGIOUSLY ERRED,—until that is done, and until the great mass of our intelligent people is satisfied, let the church stand, on this point, as she has done, and we shall yet see the pleasure of the Lord prospering in our hands, and peace and harmony again restored to Zion.

NOTE 1. We dare not insinuate that our brethren, who advocate a consistory, are of this spirit. But we fearlessly aver, that such characters have existed; and, as human nature is the same, such characters may be tempted yet to exist, where the facilities are the same.





## APPENDIX.

### NOTE 1, REFERRED FROM PAGE 22.

THESE views receive additional corroboration from the Rev. Dr. W. Symington, of the Reformed Presbyterian church, Scotland, in his essay on the "Dominion of Christ." In chap. 7, sec. 7, in which he shows that "Christ, in virtue of his mediatorial dominion, appoints, qualifies, and invests the officers in his church," he presents these very just observations: "The permanent and ordinary *office-bearers* in the church, are *presbyters*. These are of two kinds, namely, such as *teach* as well as *rule*, and such as *rule* only. The former, are commonly known by the names of pastors, teachers, or ministers; and the latter, by the name of *ruling* elders." "As to the presbyters of the second class—those we mean, who only rule—their existence seems plainly enough intimated in the plurality of elders, which existed in the primitive churches, it being highly improbable that there should be more than one teacher who requires to be supported by the members, in the distinction made betwixt 'him that exhorteth,' and 'him that ruleth,' and betwixt 'teachers,' and 'helps and governments.'"\*

This quotation shows, that the author of the foregoing pages, is not alone in his views of the "permanent and ordinary officers of the church." Advocates for modern deacons, maintain, that the Redeemer did ordain and appoint *three* distinct, permanent, and ordinary officers in the church; these are, pastors, elders, and deacons;† our author asserts, that there are but two "permanent and ordinary officers;" and these are covered under the general term, "presbyters," which he distinguishes into *teaching* and *ruling* elders; and supports the distinction of the latter, by applying to them the united terms, "helps and governments." As to the question—Whose views are right? Those of the author which we cite, or the views of the author of "The Deacon," the reader cannot determine, by the known character or ability of the one or other of the authors; but, by this fact he may—Whose sentiments are most clearly in accordance with the word God? On this question, he will, certainly, give his assent to the former.

That we are doing justice to the sentiments of our author, it will appear satisfactory, from two facts. The author is a member of the synod of the Reformed Presbyterian church in Scotland, which has adopted the "Book of Ecclesiastical Government and Discipline, on *Presbyterian Principles*," which is the law of the church in that land; and throughout that whole document, neither the word "deacon," nor "deacon's office," is so much as *once* named. "The church," says

\* See pp. 133, 134, N. Y. Ed., 1839.

† See "THE DEACON," from the 1st chap., throughout.

that instrument, "is ruled by elders. Elders are of two kinds: the elders, who labor in word and doctrine; and the elders, who rule only. A meeting of the teachers and ruling elders of a congregation for government, is called, for the sake of distinction, a session; it is the presbytery, the *consistory* of the elders of a congregation."\* Again: "Of the session: It pertains to the session—to distribute to the necessities of the poor; to make prudential arrangements for the religious interests of the congregation."† No account here, of deacons to take care of the poor, nor of consistory, other than that composed of minister and ruling elders, to whom is also committed the *charge of the poor*.

Another circumstance that induces us to believe we have taken a proper view of the author's meaning, is, that he makes a distinction between "teachers," and "helps and governments;" by referring the former to the minister, and the two latter, to the *ruling elder*, thereby making "helps and governments," but different names of the same office-bearer, as we have done in this essay; contrary to the sagacity of some, who have discovered in the term "helps," deacons—merely temporal officers; and in the term "governments," the office of ruling elders. If our investigations of Divine truths be guided by such arbitrary expositions as this, we may make the scriptures speak any sentiment that imagination or party interest, may dictate.

#### NOTE 2, PAGE 27.

The following remarks are so appropriate, and withal so just, coming from so great an author, that we could not refuse them a place in our notes: "If the essentials of christianity are not to be found in the scriptures, but in a supplementary tradition, which is to be sought in the works of those early Fathers who were orthodox, the foundations of a Christian's faith and hope, become *inaccessible* to nearly the whole of the laity, and to much the greater part of the clergy." "Every thing, in short, pertaining to this appeal, is obscure,—uncertain—disputable—and actually disputed, to such a degree, that even *those who are not able to read the original authors*, may yet be perfectly competent to perceive how unstable a foundation they furnish. They can perceive that the mass of Christians are called on to believe and to do what is essential to christianity, in implicit reliance on the *reports* of their respective pastors, as to what certain deep, theological antiquarians have *reported* to them, respecting *reports* given by certain ancient Fathers, of the *reports* current in their times, concerning apostolical usages and institutions! And yet whoever departs, in any degree, from these, is to be regarded, at best, as in an intermediate state between christianity and heathenism!"—*Atp. Whateley's Apostolic Succession*, pp. 139—142.

#### NOTE 3, PAGE 46.

Considerable having been said about ecclesiastical incorporations, as inconsistent with reformation principles, a few remarks in this

\* Page 6, sec. 6. *Proofs*: 1. Tim. 5: 17. Mat. 18: 16—20. Acts 14: 23.

† Page 9, sec. 2.

place, are deemed proper to prevent misapprehension upon a misrepresented subject.

Application to the State Legislature, or availing ourselves of the advantages of a permanent statute, "made and provided" in such cases, where no sinful oath or term, is required, involves in it no more homologation of, or identification with, the government, than the holding of lands, or property guaranteed, or secured to the rightful owner, with the right to dispose of it as he thinks proper. If Reformed Presbyterians may hold lands, deeded and secured to them under the *county seal*, where is the harm, or where is the difference of holding ecclesiastical property by a similar tenure?

Deny this privilege, then we may not apply to the civil court for a redress of wrongs done us; "a strong man armed" may come and force us out of our little cottage, may drive away our cattle, and carry our children into bondage, and we must tamely submit. It is, in fact, reviving the old popish doctrine of "passive obedience, and non-resistance:" "*might*, will then claim *right*," and where is our security? But, the objector may reply: "I do not own property: I would not have a deed of property as a gift; and, therefore, the remarks not apply." But, Sir, if you do not *own* property, you must *occupy* property *owned* by some one, or live in the air. That *some one* holds his *right* from some other *one*, and no matter how many intermediate *ones*, the property is held, secured, and enjoyed, by the right guaranteed to the owner, by civil authority. And, certainly, if the person who hires a slave from a slave-holder, or an overseer, and pays the hire, not to the slave, but to the proprietor or his agent, is as criminal as the one who holds the slave: so, the renter or lessee, who enjoys the use of property for a longer, or a shorter time, and pays a stipulated sum for his privileges, does, indirectly, the same thing as he who holds his deed under the *county seal*. If the principle opposed, were carried out consistently, "then must we," as Paul says, "needs go out of the world." It is useless to say, "the earth is the Lord's," and I have a right to a residence. This is all true: but then you acknowledge another right by the payment of your taxes, rents, &c., and this fact concedes the question.

All that the incorporated body claims, is that which it is entitled to by the just and righteous laws of the land, where it exists. The body corporate asks a legalized right to buy and sell, without giving up any principle, or complying with sinful terms. Suppose a company of Covenanters, in sailing from Europe to America, were shipwrecked upon an island inhabited by native heathens, whose fields overspread the whole island: and suppose these Covenanters had no hopes of regaining their native or destined land, and concluded to take up their residence there, and erect a church; might they go and erect a church in any of the fields they thought proper? or, rather, ask permission, and perhaps give a valuable consideration for permission, and an exclusive right? Justice, reason and scripture, say, ask permission. Abraham, the father of the *faithful*, had no scruples on this point. He asked permission of the sons of Heth. He urged the payment of a stipulated sum.\* So also did David.†

\* Gen. 23: 3.

\* 2 Sam. 24: 19-25.

The statute, relative to "ecclesiastical incorporations" in the State of New-York, is of such a general character, as entirely to remove all scruples from the mind of any one, who would not "strain at a gnat." It does not even require *citizenship* in the applicants: the statute expressly states, "that any body of men meeting together for religious purposes," may, without any restriction as regards their ecclesiastical policy, obtain an act of incorporation. Here is an acknowledgment, upon the part of the State constitution itself, that neither homologation, identification, nor citizenship, is implied: and if the law-makers themselves have thus declared this fact, he is wise above what is revealed, to find a homologation in the whole transaction. "If an appeal," says a learned writer, "may be made to the captain of a band of robbers, without implication in his criminality, much more to these institutions which, though wrong in some fundamentals, are yet aiming at the good of civil society."\* So here; as the daily comforts and domestic enjoyments of the objector himself demonstrate. The fact of rolling back, over the shoulders of a few intervening individuals, the right of tenure, may remove the object from our more distinct vision; but it does not change the nature of the case. The church is as much entitled to the equitable provisions made by the law, as individuals; and may enjoy these with the same impunity. But when entangling oaths, or sinful compliances are required, it essentially alters the case.

#### NOTE 4, PAGE 55.

A few words further appear to be necessary on the subject of trustees. Many and bitter things have been said of trustees, in the Christian church; enough to induce one to think that they are almost a band of robbers. They have been represented as man's invention, instead of Christ's institution; as deriving a right to election and office from contribution; as irresponsible and not trustworthy; as liable to withhold the minister's salary, and shut the doors of the church; and to make merchandize of the church's property "without redress," &c. &c., with many more and worse things concerning them.†

To view these allegations in the most favorable light, when compared with facts, we can not but say, that they are ungenerous misrepresentations. Some few remarks have already been offered upon the subject; but as in that place a particular notice could not be laid before the reader, it was thought proper to refer the further consideration to a note.

It has been satisfactorily shown, that deacons, in the modern acceptance, are but a degraded state of the ruling elder, and, consequently, that they, as merely temporal functionaries, are not Christ's institution, but the office of ruling elder, degraded, and palmed upon the credulous, as a Divine ordinance: therefore, whatever system, relative to mere temporalities, may be introduced, it takes place of no Divine ordinance. The trustee-system makes no false pretences;

\* Dr. Wylie's "Sons of Oil."—Ans. to Obj. 6.

† "THE DEACON," pp. 42—54.

claims nothing Divine ; they are only the representative agents of the whole body of God's people in the congregation to which they belong.

It is not fair reasoning to take an extreme case, or the abuse of a system, good in itself, to prove its unlawfulness. The power of the ministerial office has been abused ; will that prove that the office is not of Divine institution ? We are not bound to defend the practice of other churches. It is to the existence of trustees in the Reformed Presbyterian church, that our remarks are to be confined. And with this limitation, we assert, that trustees may, with propriety and consistency, be chosen from the members of the church in good standing, as their representatives.

A congregation, our opponents admit, is a "moral person ;" and, if so, it has a right to do its work personally, or upon the principles of representation, to appoint a select, competent few, to carry out the dictations, the instructions of the whole body, and make their returns of diligence therein, at the times required by the source of their appointment—the congregation.

The same reasoning that opposes the trustee, or committee-man, equally opposes what has been and still is the approved practice of the Reformed church, in appointing commissioners to attend the courts of the church, to lay before them the wishes of the congregation. These wishes are presented either *verbally*, or in *writing* ; in the discharge of which duty, they are to report their diligence in due time. The commissioner, in his appointment and objects, sustains precisely the same relation to the congregation that the trustee, or committee-man does ; he is, in fact, their trustee ; he receives his appointment from, and is accountable to, the congregation. The only supposable difference that can be conceived, is the *objects* for which they are appointed—the *wishes* of the congregation. These *wishes* are entrusted to the commissioner, in *words*, or *writing* ; but, to the trustee, the same fact—the *wishes* of the congregation—is entrusted, in the form of money, or the management of fiscal matters.

If this representation be correct—and it cannot be fairly controverted—it will be abundantly evident, that trustees are as responsible, and as safe and trust-worthy, as the supposed deacons would be, with the solemnity of ordination, even by imposition of hands.

No intelligent Covenanter will maintain, that contribution or pew-holding, gives a right, either to vote, or to hold a trusteeship. Among New-England Congregationalists, this right is conceded ; but *we* deny it. If a congregation issues a subscription paper to raise funds for a given ecclesiastical purpose—no matter by whom the subscriptions are solicited, nor from whom subscriptions or donations are received—the body issuing the paper, has a right to limit the appropriation, and the persons subscribing, do, by that fact, give up their right, and concede the whole control of the funds thus donated, to the congregation itself, or to their duly appointed representatives—the trustees, or to whomsoever the congregation may appoint. The right, either to vote, or to hold the office of trustee, arises exclusively from church-membership of approved standing, and not from any supposable adventitious circumstance.

"They are irresponsible!" Is not a private member of the church as responsible to ecclesiastical and civil law, for a misdemeanor, as an ordained deacon? The fact of being appointed, as the congregation's representative, to transact the business assigned them, can not destroy their accountability to the congregation. The same people that would choose the deacon, chooses the trustee;\* the only difference, then, that can be reasonably supposed to exist, consists in the mere fact of *ordination*; and will ordination make a man honest, responsible and trust-worthy? Certainly not; unless we suppose, that it possesses something like the virtue of "extreme unction." Ordination is a solemn and sacred rite; but, to employ it as a panacea to make men honest and trust-worthy in handling money, is solemn trifling; as well may we plead for the consecration of church bells, piously to convoke sinners to the place of worship.

It is a reflection upon our church-members—a gross reflection, to insinuate, that trustees would purloin the church's money, the *minister's salary*, or close the church's doors, only because they have not been ordained. They are men, as all church-members are; they are fallible, and may do wrong: but, it is asked, Are deacons, ordination and all, any thing more than men—fallible men—and just as liable to do wrong?

To throw greater obloquy on our church-members, if they happen to be trustees, it is boldly asserted, that "for human wisdom to devise a system of pecuniary management for the church, impugns the wisdom, or goodness of the church's Head."† Wherein? How does it do so? Has the Redeemer told us *how* we are to raise ecclesiastical funds, the *minister's salary*? &c. &c.; whether by land-rents, assessments, subscriptions, contributions, or pew-rents? If he has instructed us how, where are the instructions to be found? If he has not, then has not "human wisdom devised a system," nay, several systems, for raising that precious article—money, about which there has been so much contention? Is it not as much impugning the Redeemer's wisdom, to adopt any, or all of these expedients, some of which the objectors themselves adopt, as for a congregation to condense their operations, by choosing approved persons from among themselves, to carry into effect their wishes? Trustees are at least as safe, under any circumstances, as deacon Judas was.

Moneys raised for ecclesiastical purposes in the Reformed Presbyterian church, are not a joint stock, as the stock of a rail-road company, as has been asserted;‡ in which all have a share, according to their contributions, whatever be their character: it is a specific, a devoted stock, consecrated to ecclesiastical uses, in which all members, while they continue in good standing, have a joint interest, but which stock can not, without sin, be diverted from the object of its dedication. It affords great pleasure to quote the following very appropriate illustration of this last remark, from an author whose misrepresentations, or at least misapprehensions on the subject of trustees, we have ventured to oppose: "This point may be still further illus-

\* See "THE DEACON," p. 44, line 13, where this fact is denied.

DEACON," page 44, line 23.

† "THE

DEACON," page 49, line 11.

trated by the laws and doings of nations. Nations derive a revenue in many ways, from *foreigners*: yet, they do not, on that account, allow foreigners a vote, even for officers who manage the revenue. The revenues are national property. The right to a voice in managing them, is, consequently, a privilege of citizenship. No other doctrine would be listened to in the commonwealth. National security against foreign influence, requires them to pursue this course.”\*

Now, substitute *Reformed Presbyterian churches*, for nations, &c., in the appropriate places, and, as an illustration, we do not desire a better one. Like the nations, the church may receive money from any legitimate source, i. e., by lawful means, even from *foreigners*, “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel;” and, like nations, she claims the control of the funds received, as she thinks proper; and, like nations, affords the said foreigners all protection and external privileges that do not imply citizenship; and, like nations, she encourages all to identify with the body politic, upon her own terms.

That we may present, in one view, all that has been offered in this note, in our endeavor to remove reproach from our church-members, we submit the following propositions, as containing the amount:

1. That a congregation is a moral body.
2. That it may adopt such measures, as Christian prudence may dictate, to raise the means of support, and for the appropriation of the same, without contravening any Divine institution.
3. That it may entrust these matters, with suitable instructions, to a small number of themselves, representing the whole, called committee-men, or trustees.
4. That *trustees* “are chosen by the people, and are the representatives of the church.”†
5. That these representatives take the place of no Divine institution. Because,
6. The Redeemer has not directed the ordination of a class of officers for *mere temporalities*; but the modern deacon is a degraded state of the ruling elder, or a human invention, under holy pretences.
7. That no donation, contribution, or offering, gives a right to vote, or to hold the appointment of trustees, in the Reformed Presbyterian church.
8. That the right of voting and trusteeship in said church, is alone derived from membership.
9. That trustees are, therefore, to be chosen from approved members of the church alone.‡
10. That they are as trust-worthy and responsible to ecclesiastical and civil courts, as deacons can be; and are as easily brought to an account for misconduct.
11. That they have no more opportunity to withhold the minister’s salary, to purloin the church’s funds, close the church doors, or sell the church’s property, than the deacons have.
12. That the opposition to committee-men, or trustees, as it is represented in the pamphlet alluded to, is an ungenerous insinuation against the piety, honesty and integrity of our worthy church-members.

\* “THE DEACON,” p. 53. † See “THE DEACON,” p. 44, l. 13. ‡ 1 Cor. 16: 3.

## NOTE 5, FROM SEC. 76, PAGE 35.

The concessions of an opponent on a disputed point, must certainly give great weight to the opinions of his antagonist. It is asserted in the preceding essay, that the deacon's office has generally fallen into disuse in all departments of the Presbyterian body, since about the year 1638. A few solitary exceptions are admitted. The author of "The Deacon," admits this allegation to the full extent; and attempts to account for their disuse, but we think in no satisfactory way, especially, in the furtherance of his cause.—In the appendix to "The Deacon," note A, he offers the following remarks:

"The discontinuance of the office of the deacon in the Scottish churches, and those which have derived their system of doctrine and order from them, is a subject of inquiry which possesses both an historical and a practical interest at the present time. The Act Recissory, in 1661, broke down at once most of the fabric which had been erected during the Second Reformation. It left, however, the congregations in possession of their organization, until further acts of legislation, and deeds of violence, destroyed in many districts, even this part of the Presbyterian structure. This was particularly the case among those who faithfully resisted seduction, as well as violence; and refusing to accept of any *indulgence*, were driven into the mountains and caves, by the dragoons of Dalziel and Claverhouse. After the Revolution Settlement, in 1688, when William and Mary were called to the throne, and Presbyterianism re-established, (but not upon pure scriptural principles,) deacons existed for a short time in the Scottish Establishment. It appears, that this office had been, at least partially, neglected before the year 1719; for in that year, an act of assembly required 'ministers to take care that deacons, as well as elders, be ordained in congregations where deacons are wanted.' This law was ineffectual. The causes which had led to the previous neglect, still continued to operate; and that, too powerfully for legislative enactments to counteract. Not very long after that period, deacons were not generally found in the congregations of that establishment. This accounts for the want of this class of officers in those denominations which derive their origin from that church, since the period when she ceased to have deacons."

Here, all we have asserted relative to the disuse of the deacon's office, is fully admitted. We accounted for it in the same way that we did for the disuse of doctors, sponsors, &c., to wit, that our venerated Reformers did not fully approve of the office, though it was pressed into their standards, and there barely tolerated for the sake of greater "uniformity." The author referred to, accounts for the disuse, thus:

"As to the Covenanters, who dissented from the Revolution Settlement, it is not difficult to ascertain why this office should have disappeared from among them also. While the persecution raged, it was impossible to preserve their perfect organization. Whether the deacons, which James Renwick, in a letter to Sir Robert Hamilton, says he "was about to ordain," were ever actually ordained, or not, is uncertain. His speedy martyrdom probably prevented it. After the year 1688, their "Societies" were left *eighteen* years without a minister. Of course, no ordinations took place during that period among them, either of elders, or of deacons. They were, literally, 'like sheep without a shepherd.' This was their state for many years after the constitution of a presbytery. They could scarcely be said to have *congregations*; they were rather *missionary stations*, dispersed here and there. A full and regular organization could hardly be looked for. Moreover, it ought to be remembered, that before the period when their congregations had become compacted, the churches around them had dropped the deacon's office. There was, consequently, nothing in their circumstances, to recall this office. Other plans had gradually grown up for the accomplishment of the objects contemplated in its institution."

These quotations would have been superfluous, were it not that the advocates of temporal deacons profess to find them in the church from the earliest days of the Reformation. When the ablest advocate that has appeared in modern times in the cause, who modestly, but incorrectly, styles himself a "pioneer,"\* has admitted our statement, those who have read less upon the subject, should not assert too positively. In the north of Scotland, in some congregations, in the established church, they have deacons, who perform all the duties of ruling elders in common with them, except of voting in sessions.

\* Samuel Rutherford and Dr. Miller, both preceded him.