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relation to him. Therefore it is not apologetical and polemical; but it is a testimony and an instruction. It is testimony concerning Christ and the society united with him by faith. And it contains instruction to the latter.

This brings us to our own answer to the question as to the final design of the Gospel. We shall scarcely need to do more than gather the results of the previous inquiries.

[To be continued].

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## ARTICLE II.

### THE DIACONATE.

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THE question has recently been raised, whether the diaconate was an office in the apostolic church. Some have contended that it was not; but rather an ecclesiastical growth of a later date, and that if we would return to apostolic simplicity the office, as it now generally exists in our churches, must be discarded. If this be so, we ought to know it, and act accordingly. Our fundamental principle is, that the Scriptures alone are our guide in all matters of faith and practice. To this principle we should unhesitatingly conform, whatever may be the result. We should not shrink from its application, even if it should overturn customs which have been most venerated by us, and should lead us to act contrary to all the teachings of our fathers. In this there will be universal agreement.

Let us then examine the Scriptures on the question at issue. In this examination we must bear in mind that the polity of the New Testament churches grew up gradually. Christ laid its foundations when he gave to his disciples the ordinances, — baptism and the Lord's supper, — and the great law of discipline found in Matt. xviii. On these foundations the apostles built, as the necessities of the churches,

gathered through their labors, demanded. We should naturally expect, therefore, to find the polity of the apostolic churches most complete in the latter part of the apostolic era. This expectation is not disappointed. The polity of the New Testament churches is most clearly outlined in Paul's Pastoral Epistles.

Moreover, the object of these later epistles furnishes an additional reason, which does not conflict with, but re-enforces, the preceding, why the polity of the New Testament churches is more clearly presented in them than in the earlier and more weighty letters of Paul. The object which the apostle had in view, when he wrote the Pastoral Epistles, was to give to both Timothy and Titus special directions concerning the formation and government of churches, while the object in the earlier epistles was mainly to correct false notions of the gospel, and to hold in check corrupt tendencies, or to reform corrupt practices. Hence all allusions to church polity in the earlier epistles are merely incidental. Outside the Pastoral Epistles Paul never uses the term *πρεσβύτερος*, and writes *ἐπισκοπος* only once, in the salutation of the Epistle to the Philippians. In Ephesians he speaks of presbyters, but calls them pastors and teachers. He names them again in 1 Thess. v. 12, but designates them as *προϊσταμένοι*. In the same incidental manner he speaks of deacons certainly once in Philippians, and probably also in Rom. xvi. 1, xii. 7, and 1 Cor. xii. 28. But when we turn to the Pastoral Epistles we find that the discourse of Paul is directly and explicitly concerning church officers. It is most reasonable, therefore, that what is there said concerning deacons should first claim our attention.

In 1 Tim. iii. Paul writes of church officers. He first mentions the office of a bishop and declares that if any one earnestly desires it, he desires a good work. He then states the qualifications of a bishop or overseer. This accomplished, at vs. 8 he introduces to our notice deacons, and proceeds to point out their qualifications. It is natural to suppose that if the apostle presents to us in the first passage one office

and officer of the church, he designates still another in the second; for the adverb *ἑσάυτως*, in like manner, which is here employed to introduce the passage referring to deacons, is used to separate classes which have very intimate relations with one another. Thus it is employed in chapter ii. 9 to separate women from men, and in Tit. ii. 2, 3, 6 to place in separate groups the aged men, the aged women, and the young men. In both instances these classes were united in church-fellowship. Now the subject of 1 Tim. iii. is unquestionably church officers and their qualifications; these officers are intimately associated, but *ἑσάυτως* separates them into classes. Even those who deny that there were deacons in the apostolic church are ready to admit this; but they deny that the classes here referred to are of different ranks — that the deacons held an office inferior to that of a bishop. They affirm that there was only one order of officers in the apostolic church, the classes into which it was divided were co-ordinate; both were preachers, — the bishop or presbyter was a local preacher, the pastor of a single church; the deacons or helpers were preachers at large. They were such as Paul, Titus, Archippus; and in our own day, superintendents of missions, evangelists, and professors in our institutions of learning are deacons or servitors.

Now it is true that *ἑσάυτως* in this passage does not show that deacons are subordinate in office to the bishop, nor does it show that they are co-ordinate with him; it simply separates them as a class of officers from him. That they were a different order of officers from the bishops, though intimately associated with them, is clear from the 'qualifications of the two orders. In some respects the qualifications are identical; but so far as they are so, they refer to character and administrative ability, but differ as to the ability required for teaching. The bishop or overseer must be "apt to teach," or "apt in teaching," and also "able with sound teaching both to exhort and to refute the gainsayers," while no such qualification is demanded in the deacons; it is sufficient in their case if they hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure

conscience." Now this difference is so marked as to settle, it seems to me, beyond all controversy, that two distinct orders of officers are here placed before us. The one must have power to teach the churches and to refute those who speak against the truth taught, the other need not possess this power in any unusual degree. And there is scarcely a more radical difference as to intellectual endowments than that between him who possesses the gift of aptly communicating truth and him who is destitute of it.

It is in vain to oppose to this conclusion, as some have done, that *ἐπίσκοπον*, in verse 2, has the article, while *διακόνους*, in verse 8, wants it. It is urged that the article in the first instance definitely points out the bishop as a church officer, while its absence in the second instance leaves *διακόνους* a general and indefinite term, which by no means clearly indicates a class of officers separate from the bishops. But the two cases are not parallel. One word is singular and the other plural. If both had been singular, both would doubtless have had the article; but, as it is, the latter is just as definite as the former, for the anarthrous plural is commonly used to designate classes of things which are well known. The Greek article is employed when a thing is not sufficiently definite without it, but when there can be no mistake in reference to the object named it is omitted. Its absence, therefore, especially when the substantive is in the plural, usually denotes the highest degree of definiteness. Thus Winer says (§ 19): "The article is omitted before such words as, signifying objects of which there is but one in existence, are nearly equivalent to proper names. . . . Hence the names of virtues and vices, etc., are often anarthrous." A note at the bottom of the page says, that to these "must be added the names of sciences and arts, of superior dignities and offices." Thus *διακόνους* points out a class of officers who alone were so designated. Their name had become "nearly equivalent" to a proper name, and as the article could not have added greater explicitness, it was omitted.

As exactly parallel cases, we point to presbyter and bishop,

in v. 19; Tit. i. 5; 1 Pet. 5. 1; and Phil. i. 1. In the first passage we have the anarthrous singular, and in the rest the anarthrous plural. In the last, bishops and deacons are conjoined, but both are without the article. Must we conclude that it is doubtful if there was an order of officers called bishops or presbyters, because we so frequently meet the words without the article? But if we cannot come to such a conclusion concerning bishops, in Phil. i. 1, can we concerning deacons, in the same passage? But we have spent too much time with this trivial argument.

It is, moreover, asserted, because *διακονεῖν* and its cognates express the generic idea of service, and are used to designate all sorts of labor, from that of an apostle of Christ to that of a household servant, that deacons could not have been a regular order of church officers, designed to perform a specific work. But this argument proves too much. The words "apostle," "bishop," and "presbyter" severally express generic ideas. Apostle means one sent; its Greek equivalent in the classics designates a messenger or ambassador, and a commander of a naval expedition. In the New Testament, it designates any one sent by a superior (John xiii. 16), the messengers sent with Paul to convey the contributions of the churches of Achaia and Macedonia to the poor saints at Jerusalem (2 Cor. viii. 23), and also Epaphroditus, sent by the Philippian church to minister to Paul's necessities in prison (Phil. ii. 25). Bishop signifies an overseer, a watcher; the word so translated was used in Grecco to designate the officers placed over subject states, a military scout, one left to guard the luggage of an army, and a watch of a fleet. Presbyter denotes an aged man; and as old men, on account of their wisdom and experience, were chosen as envoys of the state, it sometimes meant an ambassador. Neither of these words is so common as *διάκονεῖν* and its cognates; but each expresses a generic idea. If deacons were not a regular order of church officers, because the word may denote one who does service of any kind, it follows from the same process of reasoning that there were no apostles of Christ, because

the word "apostle" means one sent by a superior on any kind of an errand; that there were no bishops, since the word merely designates overseers; that there were no elders, for that term primarily means simply old men.

Finally, in determining who are meant by *deacons*, in vs. 8, we are told that Paul (1 Cor. iii. 5; Eph. iii. 7; Col. i. 23) and his companions in the ministry (2 Cor. iii. 6), Apollos (1 Cor. iii. 5), Tychicus (Eph. vi. 21), Epaphras (Col. i. 7), and Timothy (1 Tim. iv. 6) are styled servants, or deacons; hence these, with Paul at their head, are the persons intended. But, if we are to reason in this way, why exclude from the number Phebe, a *servant* of the church at Cenchrea, or the civil ruler called by Paul (Rom. xiii. 4) a deacon or servant of God, or Christ, called a *διάκονον* or minister to the Jews (Rom. xv. 8), or those *διάκονοι* or ministers of Satan who were "transformed as ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. xi. 15)? The word standing apart by itself is too general to determine the kind of servants intended; so whenever Paul uses it, he indicates by the connection the kind of ministers meant. He speaks of himself as a minister of the gospel (Eph. iii. 7), of himself and Apollos as *ministers* by whom the Corinthians believed, and proceeds to state what he and Apollos did (1 Cor. iii. 5, 6). Coupling himself with his companions, he declares that God made them all *ministers* of the New Testament (2 Cor. iii. 6). This shows what he meant still later in the same epistle, when he calls himself and them "ministers of God" (2 Cor. vi. 4), and also when in other epistles he speaks of Tychicus as a "faithful minister in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 21), of Epaphras, who was for the Colossians, "a faithful minister of Christ" (Col. i. 7), and of Timothy as "a good minister of Jesus Christ." These passages, in their connections show plainly enough that the *ministers* spoken of were preachers of the gospel. But when we turn to 1 Tim. iii. 8, we find no descriptive phrase attached to *διακόνους* to indicate that the servants spoken of are preachers; nor are they mentioned in their immediate relation to God, or Christ, or the gospel

of Christ, but solely in relation to the church. The apostle begins the chapter by referring to an office and officer of a Christian church; near its close, he says that he has written as he did in order that Timothy might know how to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God. As these deacons are spoken of in reference to the church alone, and as there is no intimation that they were preachers, — which, judging by Paul's usual method, if they had been, would have been given, — we conclude that they were servants in some other capacity, and that the argument by which some have attempted to identify them with Paul and his companions is baseless. To fortify this conclusion, we notice that it would be very strange if Paul had mentioned bishops before himself and his preaching companions, as his work and that of his coadjutors was superior to that of local presbyters or bishops, and that it would be still more strange if he had required of local pastors "aptness in teaching," while he demanded no such qualification for these preachers at large, with whom he was himself associated, whose mission was to found and superintend the churches.

The view that Paul presents to us, in the third chapter of First Timothy, two separate orders of church officers best accords with the briefer and less explicit references to the same subject in other parts of the New Testament. Some of the best interpreters think that the "ministry" mentioned in Rom. xii. 7 and 1 Pet. iv. 11, and the "helps" mentioned in 1 Cor. xii. 28, probably refer to deacons and their work; and, since the apostles speak in these passages very explicitly of the different kinds of teachers in the church, it is plausible, at least, to interpret "ministry," "minister," and "helps" as referring to deacons and diaconal service. But if we throw out these passages as having nothing whatever to do with the case, the salutation of the Epistle to the Philippians is unquestionably in point: "Paul and Timotheus, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and the deacons." It must be noted that bishops and deacons are here spoken of as the

officers of the church at Philippi; so that "deacons," in this instance, are certainly not preachers at large. Moreover, *ἐπισκόποις* and *διακόνους*, as we have already intimated, are both without the article, showing them to be classes of officers so well known that the article could not have given greater explicitness, and they appear here in the same order as we find them in 1 Tim. iii.

If we now turn to Acts vi. I think that we shall find even that vexed passage of apostolic history harmonizing with the above interpretation and re-enforcing it. It is not, however, necessary for our purpose to enter into a minute and thorough discussion of the occasion which led to the appointment of the seven by the church and the apostles. It will suffice to say that certain widows of the Hellenists were neglected in the daily distribution of alms. There is no evidence that this neglect was intentional; it probably was the natural result of the unorganized condition of the church when it first sprung into existence, having as yet no settled polity, no local officers. But this neglect elicited muttered complaints from the Grecian Jews; something must be done to remove the injustice, and thus prevent schism. The apostles, therefore, called to them "the multitude of the disciples," and said, "It is not proper that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." Then they bade the church to select seven men "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" whom they might "appoint over that business," declaring that they would give themselves "to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The church did as directed, and the apostles confirmed its choice by praying and laying their hands on the seven who had been chosen "to serve tables."

Were these seven men deacons? They are not called deacons. If the daily "ministration" (vs. 1) is *διακονία*, so is also the "ministry of the word" (vs. 4) to which the apostles devoted themselves. They are spoken of in Acts xxi. 8 as distinctively "the seven." Nothing then as to their official character can be determined from the name which they bore; that must be inferred solely from the work which they were

expressly appointed to perform. Whatever it may have been, it was not preaching. It was work so secular in character that the apostles could not do it without interfering with that most important of all labor, "the ministry of the word." It consisted in caring for the poor widows of the church, or in so caring for all the poor that not even the foreign widows should be neglected. The seven were to serve, or provide for, their tables. Now this corresponds to the representation in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. iii. ; Tit. i.). Just as the apostles here must give themselves wholly to prayer and preaching, so there the bishop must be "apt to teach" and "able to refute the gainsayers." Although the work of the deacons is not pointed out in Timothy, their case is so put, that we see that they were not required to teach; if not, of course they must in some way have devoted themselves to the temporalities of the church, which, in the apostolic day, consisted mainly in the care of the sick and poor. We conclude, therefore, though in the beginning of the apostolic era those who performed diaconal service were not yet distinctively called deacons, that the seven were in reality the beginning of that order of church officers.

Some, however, have maintained that the seven were elders, on the ground that two of the number, at least, Stephen and Philip, preached, and that the latter is called an evangelist (Acts xxi. 8). We reply that Stephen is not presented to us as a regular preacher. Being zealous for the truth, he provoked the opposition of some of the Jews who disputed with him concerning the gospel. But, girded by the Spirit, and filled with divine wisdom, he triumphed over his opponents. Stung by their defeat, through false accusations, they caused him to be summoned before the Sanhedrim. There he defended the gospel with such terrible earnestness, and with such cogency of reasoning that his judges were filled with rage, and "gnashed on him with their teeth." The power to make such a defence is particularly attributed to the Spirit (Acts vi. 10). As the face of Moses shone with preternatural lustre when he came from

immediate personal intercourse with Jehovah, so the countenance of Stephen was lighted up with unearthly radiance when he stood before the Sanhedrim, showing that he was under special divine influence. His bold, clear utterances of the truth, therefore, may be attributed to one of those special *charisms* so common in the early church.

But if this consideration is without force, we notice that the heralding of the gospel by some of the seven is a fact entirely consonant with the general spirit and acts of the apostolic church. The laymen of this church, when scattered by persecution, went everywhere making known the glad tidings. The first church gathered among the Gentiles was the fruit of their preaching. Their labors at Antioch in Syria so perfectly accorded with the ideas of the apostles that when Barnabas, who had been sent from Jerusalem to investigate the matter, saw what had been accomplished by zealous laymen, he did not rebuke them, but rejoiced; and for a whole year he and Paul labored to perfect the work so unexpectedly begun. For a deacon or any one who was full of the Holy Spirit to preach in the apostolic church is just what we might expect, and his preaching would not show that he was an elder. And if a deacon had gone from place to place heralding the glad tidings, he would probably have been called an evangelist, or if Philip became an ordained preacher at large, if he were the first, he was by no means the last deacon who has stepped from the lower to the higher order of the ministry. But so long as these seven lived undisturbed by persecution at Jerusalem their main work was to care for the poor, — “to serve tables.” While they did this they doubtless made known the truth so far as they had opportunity, or more perfectly instructed in the gospel those to whose bodily wants they ministered; but the public and more formal preaching of the word the apostles claimed as their own special work.

But another reason urged to show that the seven were elders is, that, if they were not, then we have a particular account of the choice and ordination of the deacons of the

mother church, while we have nothing in reference to the choice of its elders, which is regarded as very improbable. But why? We have no account of the choice and ordination of elders in any church of Macedonia and Achaia, or in the church at Rome, or in the seven churches of Asia, to say nothing of the churches of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. Nevertheless, we do find references to the elders of several of these churches. When, however, the seven were chosen, there were probably no elders, as yet, at Jerusalem, for the very good reason that none were demanded. Several, if not all, of the apostles were still there doing the work of elders. The apostles and church, in the exercise of good common sense, selected only those officers that were demanded; afterwards, when James the brother of the Lord took the oversight of the church and needed coadjutors, they were doubtless selected. If they had been chosen before, or when the seven were, it would have been strange, as in that case they would have been thrust upon the church when there was no necessity for them.

There is another argument still which is thought to show that the seven were elders. In the apostolic churches, the elders, it is said, instead of the deacons, had the care of the poor. What is the proof of this? When the church at Antioch made a contribution for the brethren of Judea, they sent it to the elders (Acts xi. 30). The elders here spoken of may have been those of Jerusalem; but probably the reference is to the elders of the different churches of Judea. Contributions for the poor of their congregations would naturally be sent to them, since they were the overseers, rather than to any inferior officers. But this does not show that it was their special work to look after the bodily necessities of the poor—that it officially devolved on them to distribute the gifts received. Moreover, as no one denies that the chief work of an elder is to preach the gospel, if the seven were elders, their capacity for labor must have been superior to that of the apostles, who felt that they were unable to care for the poor without trenching on their higher

duty of preaching the word. We sympathize, therefore, with Professor Lightfoot, who says, that "with strange perversity Böhmer supposes" the seven "to be presbyters."

With this view of the seven early tradition agrees. Irenaeus holds that they were deacons; and in the third century, when the church of Rome had forty elders, she had only seven deacons, in imitation of the church at Jerusalem;<sup>1</sup> and the Council of Neocaesarea (A.D. 315) ordained that no city should have more than seven deacons, basing its decree on apostolic example.<sup>2</sup>

The view that bishops and deacons were different orders in the ministry is sustained by the uniform representations of the apostolic Fathers. Clement (1 Ep. chap. 42) mentions both orders three times—once with the article, twice without it, just as Paul mentions them in the salutation of the Epistle to the Philippians; and he represents the deacons as officers of the churches established by the apostles, not as ministers at large. Polycarp mentions in the same way both presbyters and deacons.<sup>3</sup> And, though the untrustworthy epistles of Ignatius accord to deacons an elevation wholly unwarranted by the New Testament; yet they constantly represent them as an order of officers separate from bishops or elders. We find, also, that Justin Martyr (1 Apol. chaps. 65 and 67), when describing the usual services of the churches of his time, presents to us a scene the counterpart of which may be witnessed in most Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist churches when the Lord's supper is administered. In reproducing his sketch, we may unite both chapters without doing violence to either. He represents the church as gathering together in one place. Passages of scripture are read. The president or pastor exhorts the people to conform themselves to the things which they have heard. Then they all rise together and pray. When the prayer is ended, bread and wine mingled with water are brought. The pastor gives thanks; then those called deacons distribute the elements to

<sup>1</sup> Schaff. *Apost. Ch.*, p. 532.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot's *Philippians*, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> *Epistle of Polycarp*, chap. 5.

all who are present, and bear a part to the absent. It must be remembered that Justin Martyr was a man of education and travel; his observation was both extensive and accurate. He is defending to intelligent Romans the Christian churches, which had been misrepresented and maligned. He writes in behalf of their doctrines and practices; so that the representation here made is not of any single community, but of the churches generally; and it is clear that the deacons were an order of officers separate from and inferior to ordinary Christian pastors. They did not preach, but assisted in the administration of the Lord's supper, just as deacons of Congregational churches do now. But it came not within Justin's scope to mention any other duties of the diaconate. If, now, as some who clamor for the abolition of the diaconate assert, deacons as found at the present time in Congregational churches are an ecclesiastical growth, and the deacons of the apostolic day were preachers at large, then it follows from this testimony of Justin Martyr that the growth was backward—from being preachers at large, they became mere assistants of the bishops. But the truth is, that when bishops in the modern sense were developed from the apostolic bishops or presbyters, the deacons were also lifted along with them above their original position; and then conflicts arose whether deacons should be permitted to preach. Some declared that this was one of their duties and privileges; others denied it. Jerome distinguished them from presbyters, and called them Levites,<sup>1</sup> and once, "ministers of widows and tables."<sup>2</sup> The Council of Trullo said, "that the seven deacons spoken of in the Acts are not to be understood of such as ministered in divine service or the sacred mysteries, but only of such as served tables and attended the poor."<sup>3</sup> Now, this conflict about the preaching of deacons shows that their claim of the higher ministerial functions was an inno-

<sup>1</sup> We see in this representation the development of the hierarchical notion of church officers. The presbyters corresponded to the high-priest and priests, the deacons to the Levites. See Julius Müller's *Dogmatische Abhandlungen*, p. 562.

<sup>2</sup> See Bingham's *Antiq.* Vol. i. pp. 213, 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 212.

vation which at first met with opposition. This opposition, then, is another proof that the earlier and apostolic deacons were not preachers.

In the sixteenth century the Reformers attempted to bring back the diaconate to its apostolic simplicity. Luther declared that it must be so restored, that "Its service may not be the reading of the Gospel or the Epistle, as is customary now-a-days, but the distribution of the goods of the church to the poor; for we read in Acts vi. that deacons were instituted for this object. After the office of preacher, there is in the church no higher office than this administration, that the goods of the church be justly and honestly distributed, in order that the poor Christians who are unable to support themselves may be helped so as not to suffer want."<sup>1</sup> This evidence from the Reformers might be extended; but it is unnecessary. Enough has been adduced to show that deacons were an order of officers in the apostolic church distinct from bishops or presbyters.

But in the apostolic diaconate there were two branches, the male and the female. Having noted the former, it now remains for us to consider the latter. In collating the evidence of its existence, we must turn once more to 1 Tim. iii. When, in verses 8, 9, 10, Paul has set before us several qualifications for the diaconate, and pointed out the method which should be pursued in the selection of deacons, he adds, in vs. 11, "Women, in like manner, must be grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things." This is followed by designating two more qualifications for the diaconate, namely, that the deacons must be monogamous, and must preside well over their children and their own houses. Finally, the reward of those who serve well is held forth as an incentive to faithfulness: They shall "obtain for themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

It is maintained by some excellent interpreters that "women" (*γυναῖκας*), of vs. 11, means the wives of the

<sup>1</sup> Herzog's R. E. Vol. iii. p. 368.

deacons; but in the verse itself there is no such intimation: "Their wives," of the common version is an interpretation, not a translation. *Ἰυγῆ*, to be sure, sometimes designates a wife; but whenever it does, its immediate connection reveals the fact. It is so used in vs. 12; but there the word which it limits makes its import perfectly clear. As, however, an entirely new thought is introduced by that verse, we cannot reason from it back to vs. 11.

Moreover, if *γυναῖκας* designates the deacons' wives, then vs. 11, which names their qualifications, is thrust into the midst of the passage which presents to us the deacons and their qualifications. Before Paul has finished all that he has to say concerning the deacons, he drops them, and presents their wives, and then returns to them again, in vs. 12. It is true that the apostle, when unfolding the great doctrines of the gospel, does sometimes permit himself to be borne away for a time from the direct line of his argument upon some side, yet intimately connected truth, and does then return and pick up the thread of his discourse where he had dropped it; but at such times he seems to be at the mercy of the flood which bears him on. But here no such great and overmastering truth is in hand. The apostle is merely presenting the classes of officers in the Christian church, and pointing out their qualifications. There is no special warmth in his discourse. It is calm and cool. In such circumstances, to leave what he is saying of deacons, in order to delineate the character of their wives, and then to return to the topic so abruptly dropped, is a construction so harsh that we may well doubt if such an interpretation be really correct.

But still more decisive is the objection that Paul would not have mentioned the wives of the deacons, and omitted all reference to those of bishops. Calvin so felt the force of this consideration that he declared that the wives of both deacons and bishops are intended—a position which cannot be maintained with the least show of reason. Others, to parry the objection, have urged the still more untenable interpretation

that women generally are meant. Huther thinks that Paul had in mind deacons' wives, and says that the reason why he mentioned them, and not the wives of bishops, is found in the consideration that so far as the duty of deacons consists in the care of the poor and sick, their wives must share in it. This would not come far short of making deacons' wives an order of deaconesses. But against this we may successfully urge that bishops' wives, from the necessities of the case, must always hold a more prominent place in the estimation of a church than those of deacons; and their influence, other things being equal, is consequently greater. If it were necessary to insist that the character of deacons' wives should be praiseworthy, it would be much more necessary to demand a like character in those of bishops.

Furthermore, unless we regard vs. 11 as simply good advice, such an interpretation would exclude any man from the diaconate, no matter how well qualified for its duties, if his wife did not possess the requisite character; while no one, for the same reason, would be debarred from the higher and more important office of the bishop. This, to my mind, is absurd, and if absurd, it is clear enough that Paul never taught it.

We must, then, seek for an interpretation to which less fatal objections can be urged, even if it be not altogether free from difficulties. Is it not a much less objectionable view to regard the "women" of vs. 11 as deaconesses? They are introduced by *ἑσάυτως*, just as the deacons are in vs. 8. We have already seen that Paul employs this word to separate from one another different classes, as well as to intimate that the classes so distinguished are closely allied. As deacons are distinguished from bishops, so are the women from the deacons. *ἑσάυτως*, as we have also seen, determines nothing as to the subordination or co-ordination of the classes distinguished by it. The bishop's ability to teach shows that he is superior in rank to the deacons; but the qualifications of deacons and the women of vs. 11 are to a considerable extent identical, and there is nothing in the

difference of their qualifications which shows any official superiority of the one over the other. We conclude, therefore, that "deacons" of vs. 8, and "women" of vs. 11, are co-ordinate branches of the same office. We may, then, regard vs. 12 as setting forth what deacons should be in their domestic relations, and vs. 13 as presenting a motive to faithfulness in their official duties, or we may adopt Chrysostom's interpretation, and consider vs. 12 not as alone applicable to deacons mentioned in vs. 8, but as equally applying to both branches of the diaconate. On that supposition, the masculine includes the feminine. The deacon and deaconess are alike required to be monogamists, and to preside well over their own households. Both, by faithfulness in office, will secure a high place in the estimation of the church, a good degree of influence over those whom they serve; and their faith, being augmented by diligence in Christian labor, will manifest itself by great boldness in bearing testimony to the truth, both by act and word, as opportunity presents itself in their labors on behalf of the needy in the congregation.

This interpretation is sustained by a passage in the Apostolic Constitutions. These Constitutions, as they now stand, are confessedly made up of fragments written at different periods; but it is strongly probable that the passage which illustrates the use of *quivalitas* in 1 Tim. iii. belongs to the portions written nearest to apostolic times; for, while some parts of the Constitutions present three orders of church officers, and confer on the bishop power and authority unknown to the apostles, this passage mentions only two classes of church officers, — the bishop and deacons, — indicating that it was composed before the period when the later bishop reached his complete development. We find in it these words: "And let also the deacons be unspotted in all things, as also the bishop, only more active. Let their number correspond to the number of the church, in order that they may minister to the needy as workmen who are not ashamed; and let *the woman* (*ἡ γυνή*) be diligent in serving the women, and both in the things pertaining to messages, journeyings, assistance,

and service." As deaconesses are mentioned a score of times in these Constitutions, there can be no doubt that this general word *γυνή* here means deaconess, and that it is used to designate a class, just as *τὸν ἐπίσκοπον* is in 1 Tim. iii. and in Tit. i.; and Whiston translates the latter part of the passage freely as to the words of the original, but with absolute fidelity to the thought, "let both the deacons and the deaconesses,"<sup>1</sup> etc.

If, however, objections may still be urged to the above interpretation of 1 Tim. iii. 11, are they not much less formidable than to that one which regards "women" of vs. 11 as deacons' wives? The interpretation which we maintain avoids the abrupt break in the apostle's discourse with which the other must contend, and presents in perfect unity all that Paul here writes of church officers. For this reason we are constrained, until we see greater objections than have hitherto been urged against it, to defend it.

An additional evidence that there were deaconesses in the apostolic church is found, if I mistake not, in 1 Tim. v. 3-16. The main object of the apostle in this passage is to point out what widows a Christian church ought to sustain by its charities. This will be most apparent if, without taking up verse by verse, we disentangle, as well as we are able, the intertwisted threads of the text.

We notice, then, first, that there are certain widows whom a church is not bound to support. They have no just claim for maintenance who by their wantonness or voluptuousness show that they are destitute of spiritual life (vs. 6), and those whose conduct is irreproachable, if they have children or more distant relatives, must look to them for succor (vs. 4), that the church may not be burdened (vs. 16). And to enforce upon each family the duty of caring for their own widows, the apostle affirms that those who will not provide for the destitute among their dependants and in their households, have denied the faith, and are worse than an unbeliever (vs. 8).

<sup>1</sup> Apost. Const. Book iii. chap. 19.

But, on the other hand, there are those whom Paul styles "widows indeed." These have no relatives to whom they can look for aid. There is no one from whom, through consanguinity, they can claim help; they are solitary, desolate; hence they turn to God for help; they set their hope on him, and continue in supplications and prayers to him night and day. Among these there were some who, for some purpose, were enrolled or put on the list (*καταλεγέσθω*). Who were they? Some have maintained that only those put on the list were to be supported by charity; but to this it has been decisively objected that those who did not have the qualifications enumerated in vs. 9 and 10 might be equally needy, and in some instances even more so, and that to deny them aid because they had not been quite so diligent in Christian labor as others, or were not threescore years old, would be so unreasonable, so harsh, so unchristian withal, that we may know for a certainty that Paul taught no such thing.

A better interpretation is that they were enrolled for diacanal service, and were probably deaconesses. If there was a class of widows to be supported by the church, why should not the church expect some service in return from those of the class who were best qualified to render it? The qualifications demanded of them certainly harmonize with this conclusion. No one could be put on the list who was under sixty years of age. She must possess that wisdom which many years of service alone can bestow. Moreover, those enrolled seem to have voluntarily pledged themselves not to marry (vs. 11, 12), as it would not be suitable for one engaged in the service of the church to be encumbered with family cares, and a widow of sixty would ordinarily be freed from any temptation to enter into the marriage state. Young widows, even though widows indeed, could not be enrolled, lest having some tempting offer of marriage, they might be led to break the engagement which they had voluntarily made with the church (vs. 11, 12). Paul would not subject them to any such temptation, nor would he lay any obstruction in the path of one who desired to enter into wedlock,

which was ordained by God and sanctioned by Christ. Hence he advises the younger widows to marry (vs. 14), and positively forbids their enrollment.<sup>1</sup> Those put on the list were also required to be monogamists, the qualification demanded in the third chapter, if Chrysostom's interpretation be correct, of both deacons and deaconesses. It was, moreover, essential that they should have a reputation for good works, the experience acquired in the training of children, and the habit of hospitality. They must also have been inured to the most menial services on behalf of the saints; and to the work of relieving the afflicted. In short, they must have diligently followed every good work.

To have required such qualifications in order to entitle a helpless widow to the charities of the church would have been exceedingly strange, and a flagrant violation of the law of love; but if we consider those enrolled as set apart to diaconal service these qualifications are entirely fitting. As the latter interpretation so naturally meets all the demands of the passage we conclude that it must be correct.

We do not, however, suppose that all the deaconesses of the apostolic church were widows of threescore years and upwards. There were many women who labored with Paul, and, whether they were regularly appointed deaconesses or not, they certainly performed, to a greater or less extent, diaconal service. Some of them were not widows, and we have no evidence that they were aged women. Nor is it certain that this enrollment of aged widows for diaconal service was a general practice of the apostolic churches; yet it may have been practised in all those churches which had aged widows who possessed the requisite qualifications. As to these things, it is immaterial. We see that certain widows were formally enrolled for diaconal service. They may have

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the younger widows were at first deaconesses; as such their duties called them to go from house to house (*περιερχόμεναι τὰς οἰκίας* "going round," or "while going round to the houses,") but they neglected their special work and gave themselves up to tattling and mischief-making. From his experience with them in the past, Paul may have forbidden their enrollment. See Jacob's *Ecl. Pol. of the N. T.* p. 167.

been elected to this honor by a popular vote; judging from the spirit and acts of the apostolic church, we should say that this was altogether probable. Belonging to the diaconate in the same church, there may have been not only widows, but also virgins, and even married women who were childless, or whose children had grown up so as to leave them comparatively free from domestic care. If the persons rendering official service had no need of charity, the service was probably gratuitous.

It has been objected by some that a woman sixty years of age was too old for a deaconess. But such men must shut their eyes to the most patent facts. In many of our churches some of our most efficient female workers are sixty and upwards; and such is their discretion and dignity that their labor is beyond all price. One such worker is worth a score of the most zealous misses.

Moreover, deaconesses of threescore years and upwards are not unknown in modern times. In a note appended to the article on the "Deaconess" in "Smith's Dictionary of the Bible," Dr. Hackett says: "The Separate or Congregational church of Gainsborough, England (1589), had 'relievers' or 'widows,' who must be 'widows of sixty years of age at least,' whose work it was 'to minister to the sick.'" "Johnson and Ainsworth's Congregational church in Amsterdam (1606) had 'one ancient widow for a deaconess.' Though sixty years old when chosen, 'she did frequently visit the sick and weak . . . . and if they were poor, she would gather relief of them that were able, or acquaint the deacons; and she was obeyed as an officer of Christ.'" The Cambridge Platform (ch. VII. § 7) recognizes this office of deaconess. "The Lord hath appointed ancient widows (where they may be had) to minister to the church, in giving attendance to the sick, and to give succor unto them and others in like necessities."

There is still another scriptural testimony of importance. Paul commends to the Roman Christians, Phebe, "who is a deaconess of the church which is at Cenchrea." Neander found in this passage an explicit reference to the female

diaconate.<sup>1</sup> Some indeed assert that we should render *διάκονον*, servant instead of deaconess, and that there is no evidence that Phebe was anything more than some prominent woman who efficiently served, not as an office-bearer, but as a private Christian, the church to which she belonged. But we answer that Paul's language naturally applies only to an official personage. Phebe was a servant of a particular church in a sense which distinguished her from its other members. The most natural interpretation, therefore, of the passage in hand is that it represents her as a deaconess. This being true, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Mary, who bestowed much labor on Paul and his co-workers, and Tryphena, Tryphosa, and the beloved Persis who "labored much in the Lord," were also deaconesses at Rome. If the little church at Cenchrea had a deaconess, it is fair to conclude that the larger churches in the great cities had a still greater number of women filling the same office.

Our interpretation of the above passages is sustained by both the practice and the expressed views of the early churches.

Some lapsed Christians informed Pliny the younger, who was propraetor of Bythinia, in the first decade of the second century, that their only crime or error was that they met before day, sung a hymn to Christ as God, and bound themselves never to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, and never to falsify their word. "Wherefore," he says, "in order to ascertain the truth I deemed it the more necessary to examine by torture two female servants, who are called deaconesses."<sup>2</sup> As Pliny gives so much truthful testimony in his letter concerning the early Christians, the above statement is very probably correct. It is, moreover, most reasonable to suppose that he would have chosen for examination those who filled some office, and who would be most likely to understand thoroughly the doctrines and practices of the church.

<sup>1</sup> *Planting and Training* (Robinson's Translation), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> *Quo magis necessarium credidi, ex duabus ancillis, quas ministras dicebantur, quid esset veri, et per tormenta quaerere. Letters 10. 97.*

Ignatius,<sup>1</sup> after saluting the presbytery and deacons, writes: "I salute the households of my brethren with their wives and children, and the *virgins* who are called *widows*." Hefele says in a note, "Deaconesses, although they might be *virgins*, were nevertheless called *widows*, because in the primitive times of the church, widows were customarily chosen to the office of deaconesses." Hefele suggests the most probable interpretation of this passage, since it appears from Tertullian, that not only married women and mothers, but also virgins were sometimes placed in the order of widows;<sup>2</sup> and that Tertullian identifies widows and deaconesses can hardly be doubted, since he declares that the experimental training of the mothers and educators of children belonging to the order of widows would qualify them readily to aid others with counsel and comfort. In still another passage, he speaks of the apostle's prescription that permits not men twice married to preside over the church (a false interpretation), nor grants a widow admittance into the order unless she has been the wife of one man.<sup>3</sup> As here the first reference is to the bishop of 1 Tim. iii., it seems unnatural that Tertullian should have failed to mention the deacons of whom the same qualification was required, unless he looked on the widows as belonging to the diaconate. At least, as the first reference is to an order of church officers, it is difficult not to regard the second in the same light. That there was a class of widows in post-apostolic times, as in apostolic, which performed no official service and was supported by the church, is doubtless true; that there was an official class seems to me to be equally clear, and that Tertullian had this order in view when he wrote the passages referred to above. In this the most trustworthy patristic scholars agree.<sup>4</sup> The passages so understood illustrate the salutation of Ignatius to the "*virgins called widows*," and support the comment of Hefele.

In the Pastor of Hermas,<sup>5</sup> the aged woman who represents

<sup>1</sup> Smyr. chap. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Tert. De Virg. c. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ad Uxor. Lib. 1. c. 7.

<sup>4</sup> See Essay on "The Constitutions and Canons of the Holy Apostles." Translated by Prof. Ira Chase, D.D. p. 374.

<sup>5</sup> Lib. 1. Vis. 2. c. 4.

the church, directs Hermas to write two books, and send one to Clement, who would send it to foreign countries, and the other to Grapte, who would admonish the widows and orphans. Hefele says, "Grapte appears to have been a deaconess." In the conception of the writer she evidently was one accustomed to instruct the feeble and destitute, probably in their own homes. The incidental character of the testimony enhances its value. The author of the *Visions* speaks of Grapte and her work as though such labor on the part of women was a very familiar thing in his day (middle of second century).

Clement of Alexandria, in his *Paedagogus*,<sup>1</sup> says that there are in holy scripture innumerable commands to chosen persons, "some to presbyters, some to bishops, some to deacons, others to *widows*."<sup>2</sup> As widows are here enumerated with the "chosen persons," presbyters, bishops, and deacons, he unquestionably regarded them as church officers, and in his *Stromata*,<sup>3</sup> he points out the scripture on which his view is based. He says that the women whom the apostles (1 Cor. ix. 5) took about with them were not as wives, but as sisters; these sisters were "helpers of the women who stay at home; by them also the doctrine of the Lord slipped without blame into the harem; for we also know what things the high-minded Paul ordained concerning female deacons in the second Epistle of Timothy." Clement refers to the wrong epistle, and his interpretation of 1 Cor. ix. 5 may be very wide of the mark, yet his words not only show the existence of the female diaconate in his day, but also that he believed it to be founded on apostolic teaching. Jerome in his commentaries identifies the deaconesses of the early churches and the women referred to by Paul in Rom. xvi. 1 and 1 Tim. iii.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lib. 3. c. 12, § 97.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Howson, in his book on "Deaconesses," p. 37, changes, unwittingly it is to be hoped, the order of the words, and affirms that Clement specifies the "select persons" as "bishops, priests, deacons, and widows." Nor is it quite fair to use the ambiguous word "priests" instead of the unambiguous term "presbyters."

<sup>3</sup> Lib. 3, c. 6. § 53.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. xvi. 1. *Sicut etiam nunc in Orientalibus diaconissae mulieres in suo*

These testimonies from the early church might be considerably multiplied; and nothing impresses the reader of them more than their unanimity. In the first centuries all seem to have understood the First Epistle to Timothy in one way. We listen in vain for a discordant note. It is a fact worthy of attention, that conflicting views concerning the third and fifth chapters of First Timothy did not spring up until the office of deaconess had become so distorted that it had lost all apostolic simplicity, or had nearly died out in the Christian church.

But suppose it to be proved that this branch of the diacö-nate existed in apostolic times, can we account for it? Was there any necessity which called it into being? The answer at hand is so reasonable and natural that it would be difficult to understand how the New Testament churches could have grown up without deaconesses. For when these churches were gathered, women in Greek communities usually lived in seclusion, just as they do now in Mohammedan countries. On account of this, Paul was sometimes, not to say often, assisted by women in preaching the gospel. The best exegetes tell us that we must so interpret his words in Phillip-pians, "Help those women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also." These females went from house to house, making known the glad tidings to those from whom the apostle was excluded. The deacons of the churches, planted where such customs prevailed, could not enter into the houses to care for the females who were suffering from sickness and poverty. If they had attempted it, their conduct would have been the occasion of scandal, and the churches which they served would have been disgraced in the eyes of the heathen. To meet this necessity, the labors of suitable women were demanded. At first they may not have been regarded as a distinct order in the church; but, since their services were constantly required, they became known as

*sexu ministrare videntur in baptismo, sive in ministerio verbi. 1 Tim. iii. 11. Similiter eas ut diacones eligi jubet; unde intelligatur quod de his dicat, quas adhuc hodie in Oriente diaconissas appellant.*

belonging to the diaconate, and were probably regularly chosen by the churches for their work.

This apostolic institution, although, like the other offices of the church, more or less perverted, long maintained itself. It lingered in the East, where females lived in seclusion, thirteen centuries, and though the West was unfriendly to it, it did not disappear there until the eleventh century. It is not difficult to note the causes of its final extinction. In post-apostolic times one duty of the deaconesses was to prepare candidates of their own sex for baptism, and to assist them when the ordinance was administered. But, as sprinkling gradually supplanted immersion, their occupation in this respect finally disappeared.<sup>1</sup> But the principal cause of their extinction was monasticism. It was thought that special sanctity could be secured by a secluded life, and just those women who were destitute of family cares and specially qualified for deaconesses were shut up in the cloister, where a life of contemplation was regarded as the supreme good, rather than one of outward activity for others. Yet the early female solitaries, and even nuns, took upon themselves the care of the sick and poor. In later times there sprang up the Roman Catholic sisterhoods, whose special work of charity is the care of the sick and poor, which was the pre-eminent work of the primitive deaconess. In these sisters, many of whom are unquestionably noble women, we see the lingering shadow of the early female diaconate, which disappeared in the monastery.

The earliest Independents of England attempted to revive this branch of the diaconate. They were opposed in their effort by the "judicious" Hooker, who showed, in what he wrote, strange ignorance of the subject. We find, also, in Neal's History of the Puritans,<sup>2</sup> that sixty clergymen of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire assembled in London, in 1575, came to certain "conclusions" for the direction of their parishes, among which we find one in reference to

<sup>1</sup> See Herzog's R. E. Vol. iii. p. 369.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. chap. vi. p. 140 (Harper's ed.), 1844.

“collectors for the poor, or deacons.” They said, “Touching deacons of both sorts, viz. *men and women*,” etc.

Robert Browne (1582) speaks of the deacon as “the reliever,” and of the deaconess as “the widow.”<sup>1</sup> In another connection, we have already spoken of the “ancient widow” at Amsterdam, in 1606; we find, also, that at Wesel, in the Low Countries, there was a female diaconate, from 1575 to 1610.<sup>2</sup> But all these efforts to revive an apostolic institution at last failed.

The establishment, in our own day, of deaconesses' institutions in Europe, which bids fair to provoke into being similar institutions in our own country, is a clumsy effort toward the revival of the apostolic female diaconate. These deaconesses' houses, even the most praiseworthy, have as much in common with the Roman Catholic sisterhoods as with the primitive deaconesses. Their inmates, indeed, with constancy and zeal devote themselves to works of charity; but they are not, like the deaconesses of apostolic times, members of the churches which they serve. They form independent communities by themselves.

Ought we not to revive the female branch of the diaconate in its apostolic simplicity? We have many unemployed females in our churches, who might become efficient laborers in this office. What such women could achieve for Christ is shown by their ministrations in army hospitals during the more recent wars. Should not this force, so far as possible, be used in ministering to the poor and sick of our towns and cities? Have we any right to ignore it? And if this power for good went out immediately from the churches, would it not vastly augment their influence? Would not our pastors, strengthened and encouraged by such laborers, begin to say, with Paul, “Help those women who labor with us in the gospel”? Some in our churches could, and would gladly, labor without compensation; but many poor women, who now lean on the needle for a precarious support, might be

<sup>1</sup> Smith's Dictionary, Art. “Deaconess.”

<sup>2</sup> Ludlow's *Woman's Work in the Church*, p. 199.

maintained by the churches so that they could devote all their time to charitable labor. One such woman, in St. Louis, in a single year introduced into a mission Sunday-school two hundred scholars that became permanent members of it, helped by the use of the charitable fund many of the worthy poor, and so preached the gospel privately that sixteen persons received Christ as their Saviour, and were baptized into his death.

A friend asked Spurgeon who was the most efficient man in his church. He replied, characteristically, "Mrs. Bartlett." She began, a few years since, at his suggestion, to labor for the mothers of his congregation. She first instructed three or four from the scriptures on the Sabbath. Her class has increased to more than a thousand, and is seldom less than eight hundred. She instructs them in the gospel, and does all she can for their bodily comfort. If she is not a regularly appointed deaconess, she does diaconal service; laboring with her pastor in the gospel, as certain women did with Paul. As great success might by no means ordinarily crown the labors of the most faithful deaconesses; but such facts show that there slumbers within the church vast power for achieving good, which at the present day is almost wholly overlooked.

We must now speak briefly of the Duties, Qualifications, and Ordination of deacons.

1. Their Duties. We have been compelled, in the foregoing discussion, in a measure, to anticipate this point; but it needs to be treated more thoroughly. Guided by Acts vi., we must conclude that the chief duty of deacons is to care for the poor of the church, to provide for their tables; and, if the widows of 1 Tim. v. 9, who were put on the list, were expected so far as they were able to perform diaconal service, judging from the experience in works of charity demanded of them, it is clear that the same duty belonged to the female branch of the diaconate. And whenever, in post-apostolic history, the duties of deacons are mentioned, this duty of caring for the poor is almost invariably most prominent.

They are not, however, restricted to this alone. The term "deacon" means a helper, and in Acts vi. they were to care for the poor in order to relieve the apostles from that labor. Thus they helped them to preach the gospel. A deacon, being the helper of his pastor, should always be ready to relieve him, so far as possible, of every burden which hinders him from giving himself wholly to prayer and the ministry of the word. In the language of the Apostolic Constitutions, he should be his bishop's "soul and perception."

Moreover, while it is the main work of the deacons, both male and female, to care for the bodily wants of the poor and sick, yet, since they are Christian laborers, they are bound, so far as they are able, to preach to them the gospel. Thus they minister to both body and soul, and, in the highest and best sense, become co-workers with, and helpers of, the elder or elders with whom they are associated.

In perfect accord with these views, Bunsen writes: "The office of deacon, or helper, implies, in the full sense of the word, the attendance on the poor and the sick. To offer spiritual, as well as bodily aid, and, indeed, to supply all common wants, was the individual duty of every Christian; and this divine idea of services of charity had so deeply pervaded the mind of the church that the office of deacon and deaconess grew out of it. The latter were ordinarily widows, and the sisterhood of widows is nothing more than that of deaconesses."<sup>1</sup>

There is not, however, the slightest evidence, either in the New Testament or in ecclesiastical history, that it is the duty of apostolic deacons to care for the general finances of the church. Their financial work is limited to a wise distribution of the poor fund. And this is reasonable. If deacons perform the duties that plainly devolve on them, they will have neither time nor inclination for finance. Moreover, an excellent deacon may be a very poor financier. Shall he be excluded from his office because he cannot devise ways and means to meet the expenses of his church? If, however,

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus and his Age, Vol. iii. pp. 230-231.

a deacon has good financial ability, he may be placed on a financial committee; but his committee work is aside from his diaconal service. If, from any cause, his pastor has become burdened with the finances, he ought to relieve him of them; but by so doing he performs a service which does not belong to his office any more than to that of his pastor.

And as to deacons ruling a church by virtue of their office, they have no more right to do so than an elder has by virtue of his; and, as the New Testament permits elders to govern their churches only through their good works and consequent personal influence, it certainly cannot accord to deacons control over the churches on any other basis. To see deacons put the governing of the churches among their duties is quite as unseemly as for an elder to attempt to lord it over God's heritage.

2. Their Qualifications. We learn from the words of the apostles in Acts vi. 3 that a deacon should be thoroughly pious. The seven were to be "full of the Holy Spirit." Moreover, this piety should be linked with wisdom. The seven were to be filled with it, as well as with the Spirit. The wisdom here referred to, whether a gift of the Spirit or a natural endowment, appears to be good judgment, discretion, sound sense, which would help them to care for the poor with judiciousness and tact.

We need not wonder that such qualifications are required in deacons; by their piety they would commend the gospel to any in the households visited by them who had not yet received it, and would be able to instruct more perfectly those who had believed, or to comfort them when despondent under trials. If one ever needs the help of the Spirit it is when engaged in such duties, that he may be able to discern rightly the mental and spiritual condition of the afflicted, and to speak the fitting word; and if a man ever needs wisdom it is in distributing to the necessities of the poor, that he may grant relief just where it is most needed, and withhold it from the unworthy, who may be most clamorous for it, that he may give even to the truly needy so as not to

pamper them in idleness, but to encourage in them self-reliance and industry, and also so delicately as not to wound those who possess sensitive natures and are of a manly independent spirit.

With the foregoing general and comprehensive qualifications of deacons accord the more minute specifications of Paul in 1 Tim. iii. 8-12. He teaches that deacons must be "grave," dignified in conduct, or reputable in deportment in all the relations of life (cf. Phil. iv. 8). They must also be sincere and truthful, "not double-tongued," not saying one thing and meaning another, or not saying, concerning the same thing, one thing to these, another to those. Temperance in the use of wine is also required. Nor must they be "greedy of gain," lest they should appropriate to their own purposes the money or goods entrusted to them for the poor.

As to their inner, spiritual life, they must hold "the mystery of the faith," the doctrine of the gospel apprehended by faith, "in a pure conscience," a conscience undefiled by greed, or any unholy act or lust.

Moreover, they must be examples in their domestic life. Like elders they were required to be monogamous. If any man, before his conversion had been carried away with the loose morals of the times, and for some unscriptural reason had divorced his wife, and then married another, he must not be made a deacon. Tried by the word of God he was a polygamist; and as such conduct was disreputable even in the eyes of the better heathen, to make such a man a church officer, though he had thoroughly repented, would have scandalized the church.<sup>1</sup> They must also preside well over their own households. In short, they must be "without reproach," as to their moral character, faith, or domestic life. And this demand in Paul's letter that they should be "without reproach," or "blameless," answers to the demand of the apostles in reference to the seven, that they should be men of "good repute" (Acts vi. 3).

<sup>1</sup> Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Vol. ii. p. 452; Hovey's *Scriptural Law of Divorce*, p. 64.

Several of the qualifications required of those belonging to this branch of the diaconate are also required of those belonging to the other. The deaconesses, in like manner, must be dignified in deportment, and the wives of one husband (1 Tim. v. 9). If the male deacon must not be given to much wine, the female deacon must be "sober" (*κεφάλια*), must ever keep herself under such restraint as to avoid all excesses.

But some qualifications peculiar to her are named. She must not be a "slanderer"; and if the enrolled widows of v. 9 performed diaconal service, she must have an inclination and aptitude for works of charity, and experience in them; and, to crown the whole, she must be "faithful in all things," must be one who is accustomed to perform the duties which belong to every relation which she sustains, with strict fidelity.

3. Ought deacons to be ordained? If we follow the example of the apostles we ought certainly to ordain male deacons, and if we have just views of ordination there can be no objection to it, even in the case of deaconesses. It does not confer any special sanctity nor any power which has not already been conferred by election. It is simply a public inauguration. Its benefit consists in the prayer of faith offered for the divine blessing to descend on those who are thus solemnly set apart to their work. The laying on of hands is the fitting symbol of the bestowment, in answer to the prayer, of ordinary spiritual influences, and it also emphatically points out the ordained in the presence of the community as a church officer. Such a setting apart was quite common in the apostolic day. The seven were thus consecrated to their work. In a similar manner the apostles ordained elders in the churches of Asia Minor. Titus was directed to do the same in the churches of Crete. When Barnabas and Saul were about to enter upon the work of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, the church at Antioch, after having fasted and prayed, through its representatives, laid hands on them, and sent them forth on their mission. If we catch the spirit of an apostolic ordination, there is manifestly nothing im-

proper, nothing contrary to the spirit of the New Testament in laying hands in prayer on deaconesses, and craving the blessing of God on them in their work. In post-apostolic times the churches did this. We find in the Apostolic Constitutions the very prayer that was offered when a deaconess was set apart to her work. And as all the hints in the New Testament go to show that deacons are permanent officers of the church, chosen for life or during good behavior, it seems to be most fitting that they should be ordained. There is nothing in the teachings or acts of the apostles which justifies the annual election of deacons, as though their office was of no more importance than the charge of an annual committee. Directed by the Acts and Epistles, we should say that it would be just as proper to elect an elder annually, and bid him preach unordained, as to pursue the same course in reference to deacons. The one office is just as particularly named by Paul as the other, and we have the example of the apostles in the ordination of both orders of officers.

And now, in view of the above facts, can we permit the diaconate to die out in our churches, and be guiltless? Can we join the crusade against an apostolic institution, and one which common sense teaches us is so much needed? Because there are "crooked deacons," shall we scout the wisdom of the apostles, and abolish the diaconate? As there are crooked elders also, shall we apply the same logic to their office, and do it away? Deacons, as a class, certainly ought not to suffer for the misdeeds of a few of their number. Take them as a whole, no nobler band of Christian men lives to-day; and when some of them come into collision with their elders, it is not certain that the fault is always with the deacons; it is sometimes, unquestionably, with a wrong-headed elder, who finds it convenient to lay the responsibility of his quarrels off on some deacon who may be, perhaps, too resolute in opposing what he believes to be injudicious or wrong.

But nothing can ever harm the apostolic diaconate, so long as it faithfully performs the duties enjoined upon it in

the New Testament. If deacons care for the poor; if, as opportunity presents itself, they preach the gospel from house to house; if, by all means in their power, they remove the things which hinder their pastors from giving themselves wholly to prayer and the ministry of the word, then all attempts to overturn their office will be utterly futile.

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### ARTICLE III.

#### THE CHINESE LANGUAGE.

BY JOHN EDGAR JOHNSON.

THE Chinese is a language by itself, perfectly unique. It is the only specimen of a purely primitive tongue that now remains to us, and for this reason, if for no other, possesses great interest for the student of philology. It is just such a language as two persons would probably devise if thrown together in a desert, neither ever having seen a human being before. It is to be regretted that, whereas the manners, customs, and religion of the Chinese are dwelt upon at great length by our book-makers and letter-writers, little or no interest is manifested in the language of a people who number more than a third of the entire population of the globe.

We shall never be able to understand the Chinese, until we know more of their language. Our great ignorance in this respect is the cause of nine tenths of our prejudice against and distrust of them. This is not strange. Indeed, it is always so. Englishmen and Americans, travelling upon the continent of Europe, are apt to bring home a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the people in France, Germany, and Italy, just as they happen to be conversant with or ignorant of the languages spoken in those countries. To the former, especially, everything that is not English falls under the contemptuous and comprehensive head of "gibberish." The writer of this once met an Englishman in a