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ARTICLE I.

THE DIACONATE.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(3.) But, in the third place, even if it could be proved from Scripture that the Apostle included the elder, the inference by analogy from that admission to the position that among the ordinary officers of the Church, the higher officer includes the lower would appear to be illegitimate. For, *first*, reasoning by analogy from the case of extraordinary and temporary officers to that of ordinary and perpetual, is, to say the least, too doubtful to ground a theory which takes on the aspect of a regulative dogma. *Secondly*, if the apostolic office as the higher included the presbyterial as the lower, this inclusion must be conceived either under the notion of the product of a genetic process of evolution, or of a result of logical classification. Let us suppose the former—that the elder's office was evolved, produced, out of the apostle's. Now pursuing the path of this analogical reasoning, it would follow that the elder's office as lower is evolved out of the preacher's as higher. But what is the fact? Every ordinary officer is, so to speak, produced, in the development of the steps looking to his induction into office, at the last, by ordination. No ordination, no officer. Now, in the ordinary and regular condition of the church, who ordains? The higher or the lower officer? The answer is, that it is not the preacher, the higher officer, who ordains the elder, the lower officer, but precisely the contrary—the elders ordain the preacher. The preacher is genetically evolved from the presbytery. But to press the analogy under consideration would be to establish the doctrine that the preacher ought to ordain the elder. The analogy therefore is deceitful. But if it be said that we conceive of the inclusion as the result of a logical reduction, then it must be held in the sense that the lower office is included under the higher as the species is included under the genus. If this be so, then as the whole essence of the genus is contained in the species and something more that is a peculiar property, the whole essence of the apostolate descends into the elder, and he is an apostle with an additional and distinctive function. That of course no one would hold. Further, the inference is drawn from the case of the apostle to that of the preacher. He includes the elder because he is the higher officer. But the genus, we have seen, is the presbyterate, and the preacher is a

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species; so that, logically speaking, the preacher is included in the elder and not the elder in the preacher. A species may be greater than the genus—man is greater than animal; so the preacher is greater than the elder, but, nevertheless, the genus includes the species, not the species the genus. Animal includes man, not the contrary. So, logically, the genus presbyterate includes the species preacher. The whole essence of the genus, presbyter, is in the preacher, and he is something more; but the contrary doctrine would lead to the position that the elder has the whole essence of the preacher as the generic officer, and something more that is distinctive, viz., the ruling function. Neither, therefore, upon one supposition or the other can the inference be drawn from the apostolic office that in the ordinary condition of the Church the higher office includes the lower. It would seem indeed that the lower and generic office, presbyter, includes the higher and specific office, preacher, and that all we can determine is, that in the defect of the lower officer, the higher officer may discharge his functions. There is no need to formulate a theory as to the inclusion of one office in another, but simply to hold that one officer may be called upon occasionally to perform the acts habitually pertaining to the other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE II.

THE INFLUENCE OF THEORIES OF THE WILL ON
THEOLOGY.

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

them. Hence the belief that it is ever timely to illustrate the subject announced.

The method attempted will be to state, first, the three theories of volition which have been propounded, the Necessitarian, the Calvinistic, and the Arminian; and then, omitting the first, to compare the last two in their modifying power over doctrine. No attempt will be made to demonstrate the true philosophy of the will nor the doctrines of Calvinism cohering therewith, or to refute the opposing theory and its doctrinal results. The reader is presumed to be established already in both his philosophy and theology. Only the more important applications of the two philosophies can be touched in the limits of this article.

The prefatory remark should be made, that theories of the will cannot but have the most intimate relations with Christian doctrine. 1. Because they unavoidably involve the view held of moral responsibility. But God's chief relation to us is that of moral governor. Now we see an erroneous philosophy of the will exclude from the sphere of responsibility all man's concreated dispositions and desires, all those which are now connate in him, all those inwrought by an omnipotent Spirit, all the subjective consequences of a federal relation to Adam. We see it sundering the tie between disposition and volition, and placing the seat of self-determination in the separate faculty of choice, instead of the personality of the monad mind. It cannot but be, that when the view of our responsibility is modified in so many points, the doctrine touching sin, guilt, the law, expiation, shall be affected. 2. Because on the theory of the will turns our view of free agency; but free agency, as consciousness testifies, under all philosophies, determines our accountability, and makes man a subject of religion. Hence the question, What constitutes free agency? is almost synonymous with the question: How is man related to God in religion? But theology has been defined as "the science of man's relations to God." The very fact that all philosophies claim the reality of our free agency to be an immediate *dictum* of consciousness, will incline the rationalistic mind to bend its whole views of those relations, with the more confidence, to its preconceptions on that central point: he will either
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