

ARTICLE II.

THE DIACONATE AGAIN.

At the meeting of the Synod of South Carolina in 1877, a discussion occurred in regard to the best method of raising funds in behalf of the Theological Seminary at Columbia. It was maintained by some of the speakers that it would be wise to employ, for this purpose, the divinely appointed agency of deacons. On the other hand, it was contended that this view involved an abstract theory of the diaconate which had no practical value ; that the apostles discharged diaconal functions, and that, consequently, ministers may now legitimately collect money for ecclesiastical purposes, and are the most efficient agents who could be employed for that end. This debate occasioned a motion, which was carried, that a committee be appointed to report at the next meeting of the Synod upon the nature and functions of the diaconate.* This motion was not made by one of the appointees, and had no intended relation to the question of "Reform," as bearing upon the general administrative policy of the Church.

The committee were of opinion that they were not expected to perform the supererogatory task of merely re-stating the common places of the subject. Accordingly, they laid down, without expanding them, those views of the diaconal office which, as they are almost universally accepted by Presbyterians, may be regarded as assumptions; and, desiring to avoid a superficial treatment of a subject which had undergone but slender discussion, they proceeded to consider, with some thoroughness, the doctrinal aspects of the diaconate, together with the practical inferences deducible from them, concerning which either immature conceptions or differences of opinion were presumed to exist. Charged by ecclesiastical authority with the performance of a responsible office, they addressed themselves to the patient and candid investigation of a matter concerning which their own views needed a

* The Committee were, the Rev. J. L. Girardeau, Rev. J. L. Martin, and W. T. Russet, M. D.

completer development. The result of their labors was a report, in three sections; the first of which was presented to the Synod in 1878, the second in 1879, and the third in 1880. These papers were, at the request of the Synod which took no further action about them, and through the courtesy of the Editors of this REVIEW, published successively in its pages, in January, 1879, January, 1880, and April, 1881. In addition, there was also published in the REVIEW, for January of this year, an independent discussion of the importance of the office of deacon, the rhetorical complexion of which is due to the fact that it was the substance of a discourse delivered by request to some of the deacons of the Presbytery of Bethel at Blackstock, S. C.

Nearly all of the distinctive positions maintained in these papers were subjected to a formidable assault in two articles contained in the April number of this REVIEW, from the pen of our acute and learned brother, the Rev. Dr. J. A. Lefevre. This is not altogether to be regretted. Opposition to known truth is always to be lamented; but men are fallible, and it is especially by means of controversy, conducted in accordance with the rules by which it should ever be regulated, that the truth receives its clearest illumination and meets its surest establishment. If we have advocated the grievous errors which the reviewer imputes to us, we pray that he may succeed in refuting them. If we have held the truth, it will be more firmly rooted by the shaking which the storm of his criticism has given it. "Truth, like a torch, the more it's shook, it shines;" provided, as some one has suggested, the light be not shaken clean out. We confess that we were not without apprehension that our torch would be blown out by the fierce blast in which it flared. We had some difficulty in catching our breath and keeping our foothold. The reviewer displays so great a familiarity with logical weapons and is so evidently conscious of expertness in their use, that we hardly wonder at our own bewilderment, or at his confident claim "to have overthrown" our "positions, so far as logic is concerned." The array of Scripture passages, too, which has been marshalled against us, is portentous, and one would be apt to think that the least regard for inspired authority should, in view of this mass

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of evidence, induce in us a speedy abjuration of our errors. But it sometimes happens that one does not know what his assailant sees clearly—that he has been beaten, and ought, in order to save what remains of life, incontinently to surrender. Such, we reckon, must be our ignorance. For, having somewhat regained our equilibrium, and having reconnoitred our ground, we have concluded to hold it even against odds so heavy. The presumption may seem to be against us, but the battle is not always to the strong.

In dubbing us as “reformers,” the distinguished reviewer well knew the force of the epithet he used. But it was hurled at the wrong mark. We worked in the interest of no party, and for no partisan ends. We simply contended, in the discharge of a duty imposed upon us, for what was conceived to be scriptural truth touching the office of the deacon, and, as a practical consequence, the conformity of the policy of our Church to that truth. That is “the head and front of our offending;” and if it attach to us the title of reformers, we shall not refuse the reproach. In replying to the arguments of the reviewer, we shall consider them as reducible to the following points: first, the position maintained by us that the higher office of presbyter does not, in a regular condition of the Church, include the lower office of deacon, is illogical; secondly, that the same position, and others, held by us, are unscriptural; thirdly, that as the Church, as Church, is wholly ecclesiastical, ecclesiastical officers, as such, including deacons, cannot legitimately be appointed to the discharge of secular functions; fourthly, that the appeal to authority in behalf of our views is invalid. We shall, in part, invert the reviewer’s order as to the first two of these points, and begin by considering the question of the scripturalness of our position that the higher office of presbyter does not include the lower office of deacon; and for this obvious reason: unless the precise meaning of the term *deacon* is settled, any discussion concerning the logical classification of church-officers must be involved in utter confusion. Now, the significance of that term can only be ascertained by an appeal to Scripture usage. If, upon examination of that usage, it be found that the term is employed in two

distinct senses, everything in the progress of the argument will depend upon the question in which of these senses the term is used. If one party affirm of the one sense what his opponent denies of the other, it is plain, that confusion must result and no end can be reached. First, then, comes the question of Scripture usage, and afterwards that of logical relations.

I. We have carefully examined the reviewer's articles in order to discover whether he considers the term *deacon* and its cognates as employed in Scripture in one ecclesiastical sense, or in two. We have failed. Sometimes he clearly seems to hold for only one sense. And lest, through infirmity, we misrepresent him, let us hear him speak for himself. After distinguishing between two "secular" senses of the term—the one wide, meaning servant as discriminated from slave, the other narrow, signifying table-servant or waiter, he proceeds to say:

"Let it be remembered at the outlet that the name can never lose the odor of the thing which it represents: and, therefore, that our search for the ecclesiastical significance of these terms must start with the idea of service as opposed to rule, and that, too, service rendered to the body immediately in distinction from service rendered to the spirit. This notion is the very soul of the word, and the word must die forever the moment it loses its soul. Bishop and presbyter, on the contrary, with their cognates, are words of authority and dignity, and into what region soever they are transferred, bear with them always the insignia of rule."¹

We certainly gather from this statement that the reviewer maintains these two things: first, that the term, ecclesiastically related, is univocal—that it has but one sense, that of service distinctively rendered to the body, and that it is abusively employed, when used in any other; secondly, that as this service is opposed to rule, the presbyter, when he rules, does not serve as deacon. He may "deacon," but not as ruler. Further the reviewer says:

"The search for the ecclesiastical meaning of the word also starts out with an *a priori* conviction of the impropriety and violence of distinguishing the office of the presbyter from that of the deacon by the *scope* or objects of their official powers. They both equally care for persons and things—things both in and apart from their personal relations. The principle of discrimination lies in the fact that the one occupies the place of ruler and the other that of servant in the same house."²

¹ S.P. REVIEW, April, 1881, p. 356. ² P. 366.

We cannot understand this passage. What *a priori* convictions have to do with defining church officers, we are unable to see. But how with any convictions we can define them, without considering the object-matter about which they are concerned, passes our comprehension. We must abandon the basis of definition almost universally assumed—we must discard the object-matter. What then ? Why, we must take functions as the principle of discrimination. One class of officers discharges the function of rule, the other that of service. Now, how can you discriminate the function of rule from that of service, if you drop out of view the object-matter about which the respective functions are concerned ? The reviewer may tell, but we cannot. But, moreover, the ruler, according to the reviewer, is a deacon, since all church-officers are deacons. It follows that the presbyter, as ruler, is discriminated from the presbyter as deacon by the fact that he occupies two places in the Lord's house : in the one place he rules, in the other he serves. He is not Christ's servant when he rules, he is his servant only when he cares for the bodies of the poor. This, we say, it tasks our understanding to apprehend. But there is one idea which we get from this utterance. It is, that the diaconal function is one and the same, as discharged by all church-officers. There is but one sense in which they are deacons, that of ministers to the bodies of the poor. The preacher does not, as preacher, perform the functions of deacon ; neither does the presbyter, as presbyter. It remains that the only sense in which they can discharge those functions is that of service to the bodies of the poor. The passage does seem to teach that clearly. Let us again hear the reviewer upon this point:

“Christ himself, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, all ‘deacon,’ whatever else they do ; all hold a ‘diaconate,’ whatever else they hold; all fill the office of deacon, whatever other offices they fill—*all are deacons.*”¹

“It is important, too, to note that, whenever mention is made of the particular work which the apostle and others performed in virtue of their status and functions as *deacons*, it is always *the care of the poor.*”²

This is as explicit as language can make any statement. It

¹ P. 357.

² P. 359.

is proved by these quotations that the reviewer attached but one sense to the scripture term *deacon*—that of a minister to the bodies of the poor. All church-officers are deacons, because all are distributors of alms to the poor. The presbyter, as deacon, performs precisely the same function as the deacon proper.

But while the reviewer thus clearly contends for only one sense of the term, he, with equal clearness, shows that there are two :

“The widest secular sense of *deacon* is simply that of *servant*, as distinguished from *slave*, and is translated servant or minister ; and its derivatives, *service or ministry*, in the corresponding signification A narrower secular meaning of deacon often occurring in the New Testament, is that of table-servant, or ‘waiter,’ as the word is now used ; the verb and the noun having the same limitation of meaning. . . . As examples of the transition of the words from the general sense of *servant* to that of *waiter*, may be quoted the following passages.”¹

“It is time, however, to pass on to the religious and ecclesiastical sense of the words, which will appear in self-evident light, if the following passages be examined. . . . The inspection of these passages will reveal that ‘deacon,’ ‘diaconate,’ and ‘to deacon,’ have a religious sense exactly parallel with their secular sense, to wit, that the deacon *serves* in religious things, and is bound to a religious *service*, and performs it as an act of religion, both in the general sense of service and in the special one of *caring for the poor saints*. But whether the service is rendered to the soul or the body or the man, whether it is a service in spiritual or temporal things, it is a *religious service*, performed under authority by duly appointed agents of the church.”²

In these statements it is held that the term in question has, as a secular one, two senses, a wide and a narrow ; that the same distinction in signification obtains in the term, as an ecclesiastical one; and the two senses are expressly contradistinguished from each other—the one being “general,” as designating a servant, and the other “special,” as signifying a servant who cares for the poor saints. We cannot see how it can be disputed that here two senses are maintained—the one wide and general, the other narrow and special. But if that be so, as we have seen that the reviewer contends for only sense, and that the narrow one, and as the main drift of his argument supposes the existence of only that sense, we are obliged, however reluctantly, to say that self-

¹P. 355.

²P. 357.

contradiction emerges. We must ask, "Under which king, Bezoniion ?" The reviewer cannot hold to both these positions: there is but one sense ; there is more than one sense. We might fairly deem ourselves discharged from the further consideration of an argument which refutes itself by involving an inconsistency so pronounced. Let us, however, give the reviewer the benefit of his intentions. Two suppositions are possible : either, he intended to advocate but one sense, namely, the narrow ; or, he intended to advocate two senses—the wide and the narrow. Let us suppose that he designed to maintain but one scriptural sense of the term, namely, the narrow one. It is conceded by all Presbyterians, and it is explicitly admitted by the reviewer, that the term, in that sense, designates a church-officer charged with the duty of distributing alms to the poor. Now, as the reviewer has abundantly and unanswerably shown from Scripture, all church-officers are deacons. But as, according to the supposition, the term is susceptible of but one sense, namely, that of a distributor of alms to the poor, it would follow that all church-officers are distributors of alms to the poor. They are deacons, and, whenever they act as deacons, they discharge the function of distribution. When the preacher preaches, he does not "deacon;" when the presbyter rules, he does not "deacon ;" only when he distributes alms to the poor, does he "deacon." As a deacon, he is a distributor ; his deaconing is distributing ; his office of deaconship is the office of distribution. This is not a mere supposition ; it is exactly the view which the reviewer announces in certain parts of his discussion. He contends, as we have seen, that ruling and deaconing are opposed to each other.

Now, as it is always unpleasant to oppose the views of a brother beloved, we greatly prefer, on the supposition of this being his position, that he should himself destroy it. From the host of Scripture passages, which he has elaborately collected to prove that all church officers are deacons, we select a few which, a mere glance will serve to show, subvert this theory of only one sense of the terms under consideration. "Peter says of Judas, 'For he was numbered with us and had obtained part of this

diaconate.’ ” Does not this mean ministry? Can it possibly mean distribution of alms to the poor ? Did all the apostles carry the bag, as did Judas? “He (Paul) asks, ‘Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but deacons, by whom ye believed?’ ” Is it supposable that Paul meant to say, that it was by means of himself and Apollos, as distributors of alms, faith was wrought in the Corinthians ? Must not deacons here signify preachers of the gospel ? “Our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able deacons of the New Testament.” Can this mean able distributors of alms of the New Testament? “I speak unto you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my deaconship.” “ Seeing we have this deaconship, as we have received mercy we faint not.” “ God hath given to us the deaconship of reconciliation.” “ I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the deaconship.” It is simply out of the question that deaconship in these passages can have the narrow sense of the office of distributing to the wants of the poor. We marvelled when we encountered the reviewer's remark : “ Paul's apostleship ‘to testify the gospel of the grace of God’ included a deaconship, and therefore, when he reached Jerusalem, in the presence of all the elders ‘ he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his deaconship.’ ” And our wonder increased to astonishment when, just after these citations from Scripture and others like them, he goes on to say: “ It is important, too, to note that whenever mention is made of the particular work which the apostle and others performed in virtue of their status and functions as deacons, it is always the care of the poor.” What then, in the name of reason, is the general work which they performed as deacons, and which is discriminated from the particular work of caring for the poor? According to the reviewer, it cannot be preaching, it cannot be ruling, it is not distributing. What then can it be ? We are unable to guess. The passages of Scripture adduced by the reviewer himself refute the position that there is but one sense in which the term *deacon* and its cognates are used. The reviewer is a mighty man of war ; but, like Saul, he has fallen on his own sword; and if one

should be asked to finish the fatal work, he need only employ as a weapon to perform that mournful office the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church, that the word *deacon* has in Scripture a wider and a narrower sense. That surely ought to give the *coup de grace*; and its administrator might not be improperly be entitled “ a *deacon* of God, a revenger to execute wrath,” (Rom. xiii. 4.)

If we may follow the example of the reviewer in transferring the word without translating it, we submit that the passages referred to make it evident that there is a didactic deaconship as well as a distributing deaconship. The apostles and other ministers were deacons of the gospel in the precise sense of preachers of the gospel. They deaconed in the very act of preaching the gospel. It was not that their preaching office overlapped and involved a deaconing office, but their preaching office was itself a deaconing office. They were deacons as preachers. In a passage quoted by the reviewer, Paul says to the Ephesian elders: “ None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry (deaconship) which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Here the apostle states the very purpose for which he had received his deaconship. It was not in order that he might distribute relief to the poor, but it was in order that he might testify the gospel. It was not eleemosynary, but didactic deaconship—a ministry of instruction. Let us look at the fifteenth chapter of Romans, one of the places of Scripture relied on to show that the apostles acted as deacons, in the special sense of the term as distributors of alms. Even were it conceded that the passage, in one part of it, shows that the apostles did act as distributors—the proof of which, however, cannot be produced from it—it is certain that in another part it proves the existence of a widely different sense of the word *deacon*. “Now I say,” observes Paul, “ that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision (deacon of the circumcision) for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” It will not do to say that the meaning here is, that our blessed Lord was made a minister (or deacon) of the old economy for the relief of the

bodies of the poor; particularly when Paul says that he was made a deacon “for the truth of God.” What has a distributing deacon, according to the Presbyterian conception of the office, to do with a public, authorised ministration of the truth? We would detract nothing from our previous recognition of the consolatory fact that the Lord Jesus was, in the days of his flesh, a compassionate minister of relief to the temporal sufferings of men. We have ventured to say, that “as the great Deacon of Israel, he declared that he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and illustrated the noble unselfishness of that utterance by the untiring dispensation of healing to the suffering bodies of men.” But to say that his ministry (deaconship) was exhausted in the discharge of these temporal offices would be an instance of extravagance which no zeal for a theory could justify. In the very utterance just cited, our Lord goes on to announce, that in the performance of this philanthropic ministry he would “give his life a ransom for many.” He deaconed when, as a peculiar victim, he rendered satisfaction to divine justice for our sins. Did he, in dying, deacon for the redemption of the body alone? But, it may be said that in contending for a narrow sense of the word as the only one, the reviewer refers to an ecclesiastical signification as applicable to the officers of the church. This will not avail, for he expressly argues that Christ himself, as well as the officers of his church, was a deacon; and as according to him, the word can no more part with its essence, as expressing service to the body, than the body can part with the soul without dying, Christ’s deaconship must have been solely a ministry to bodily wants. But if this be inconsistently denied, as denied it must be, it is admitted that his deaconship was susceptible of more than one sense; which would be fatal to the hypothesis that the word has only a narrow sense.

Let it, however, for the sake of argument, be assumed that the reviewer speaks of the word as possessing a sole, special sense, only in relation to ecclesiastical officers. It will be allowed that, after the day of Pentecost and the organisation of the Church, the apostles were ecclesiastical officers. Now we have already seen that, in the light of numerous passages of Scripture adduced

by the reviewer himself, it is wholly illegitimate to consider the deaconship of the apostles as restricted to the special sense of ministry to the body. But, let us go with him to what he terms "the classic passage on this subject: Acts vi. 1—6." From that passage it can be proved not only that there are different senses of the word, but that these senses are contrasted with each other—that they symbolise functions which are incompatible with one another. Let us take the reviewer's own representation of the case: "The Grecians murmured that their widows were neglected in the 'daily deaconing'; and the apostles declared to the church, that it was not right for them 'to deacon tables', at the cost of neglecting the word of God; whereupon the seven were elected, and ordained, and charged with this business; and the apostles, thus relieved, adhered to or persevered in 'prayer and the deaconing of the word.'" "Now, we ask, whether the term *deacon*, as applied to tables, is not used in one sense, and the term *deaconing*, as applied to the word, is not employed in another sense? Let it be observed, that it is not said or implied that in preaching the word the apostles included deaconing to the body, but it is said that they deaconed the word. In preaching the word they discharged a deaconing which is expressly contradistinguished from the deaconing of tables. And we ask further, whether, upon the face of the passage, and upon the reviewer's own showing, the two functions of deaconing tables and deaconing the word are not pronounced incompatible with each other? The reviewer explicitly admits the apostles' declaration that it was not right for them to commingle the two sorts of deaconing. The apostles said—and the reviewer concedes that they said: It is not right for us to deacon tables ; our duty is to deacon the word. The reviewer says: It was right for the apostles to deacon tables, because the greater office of deacon of the word included the lesser office of deacon of tables. We say: It is not right now for deacons of the word to deacon tables; and *therefore* the greater office cannot so include the less as to make it legitimate, when the office of distributing deacons is filled, for the ministers of the word to discharge the functions of that office. The reviewer says: It is right now for deacons of the word to deacon

tables, even when the office of distributing deacons is filled, *because* the greater office must include the less. Our theory has been censured as unscriptural. We are willing to rest the decision of the question, which of these two theories is a necessary inference from this “classic passage” of Scripture, with the unbiassed judgment of the Lord’s people.

We think it has been proved by an appeal to this passage and to the reviewer’s own construction of it, that the word *deacon* is used in two different senses, and that these two senses are placed in opposition to each other. The general idea of service underlies them both, but they respectively indicate contrasted and incompatible kinds of service. The conclusion from all that has been said upon this point is, that the hypothesis of one ecclesiastical sense only, as conveyed by the word *deacon* and its cognates, has no support from the language of Scripture.

Let it, in the next place, be supposed that it was the intention of the reviewer to maintain two ecclesiastical senses of the word as employed in the New Testament. Let us see, what, upon this supposition, he would give up. He would give up his position that the “very soul,” the essence, of the word is the notion of “service rendered to the body immediately in distinction from service rendered to the spirit.” He would be obliged to admit that in the one sense, there may be a deaconing to the spirit as well as a deaconing in another sense to the body. And this he does admit, when, speaking of diaconal service, he says: “Whether the service is rendered to the soul or the body or the man, whether it is a service in spiritual or temporal things, it is a religious service.”¹ That is true; but how a service which, from the nature of it, can only be “rendered to the body immediately in distinction from service rendered to the spirit,” may be “rendered to the soul or the body,” as it passes our ability to comprehend, we leave to the acuteness of the reviewer to determine. One or the other; if two senses are allowed, only one sense is given up.

He would also give up his determination of “the ecclesiastical significance of these terms” as expressing “the idea of service as

¹ P. 357.

opposed to rule.” For while it is evident that the service of distributing alms to the poor is a different one from the service of ruling, it is equally evident that if there be both a wide and a narrow sense, the service designated by the general sense would not be opposed to rule, but might be expressed through it. The ruler, although not a distributing servant, would be a ruling servant. But this would be to give up the very core of the reviewer’s theory, which is, that the presbyter is a distributing servant (or deacon in the narrow sense), though not such as he is a presbyter. That is to say, if he allow two senses, he must abandon his *vita*) position that the presbyter is a deacon only in the narrow sense of a distributor to the wants of the body. This must hold true, unless there be a sort of diaconal service which is neither expressed in preaching, nor in simple ruling, nor in distribution. If there be such a diaconal service, our reduction is inconsequent. But it is one the existence of which we are unable either to think or believe. We have argued upon the supposition—the only reasonable one in the case—that the reviewer regards diaconal service as opposed to preaching as well as ruling.

He would, moreover, give up the logical position that inasmuch as, in the quantity of intension, the presbyter includes the deacon, in the sense of distributor, so, in the quantity of extension, the presbyter must be included under the deacon, in the same sense. For to hold that because the presbyter, in the first quantity, includes the deacon in one sense, therefore in the second quantity, the presbyter is included under the deacon in another sense, would be a specimen of logic which we could not impute to one so thoroughly versed in that science.

He would, furthermore, give up his grasp upon the issue—would convict himself of an *ignoratio elenchi*. What is the precise question at issue? It is, whether the higher offices of preacher and ruling elder include the lower office of the deacon, considered in the narrow sense of a distributor of alms. That is the question of which we took the negative. We never dreamed of denying, we never did deny, that the presbyter is a deacon, but that he is a deacon so and so considered. At the outset of

our discussions, we formally laid it down that the property of ministry or service as generic enters into all church-offices, that all church-officers are ministers or servants of Christ and the Church. Not expecting that our statement of the offices would be challenged by a Presbyterian, we did not deem it necessary to say that the terms ministry and ministers were synonymous with the terms deaconship and deacons in their wide signification. Taking these latter terms in that restricted sense in which they are now almost invariably employed by Presbyterians, we argued to show that the presbyter does not include the deacon in that limited sense. This position the reviewer denies; and this position, accordingly, it was incumbent on him to disprove. But if he elaborately attempt to prove that in a wide sense presbyters are deacons, he spends his strength for naught, he but "carries coals to Newcastle." Every passage of Scripture adduced by him in which the terms are used in a wide and generic sense only goes to establish what we admitted. And it is a mere waste of time, in controversy, for one of the contestants elaborately to prove what the other concedes. If, then, the reviewer really maintain two senses of the terms under consideration, he, to that extent, damages his argument, which should have undertaken merely to prove that the presbyter includes the deacon in the narrow sense; and, in that case, he would have been restricted, in his collection of Scripture testimonies, to those passages in which the term *deacon* and its cognates are used in the narrow sense. That he does maintain two senses has been clearly shown. In this we fully concur with him, but it is impossible to see how it helps his cause.

But while we contend for two senses of the terms, a general and a special, it deserves to be considered that a closer analysis reveals the existence of one general, sense and three special senses. As general, the term is the symbol of a general notion which collects under it all kinds of service, but specifies no particular sort of service. In this sense, all church officers—preachers, ruling elders, and deacons—are alike; they are servants of Christ and the Church. The preacher is a preaching servant, the ruling elder a ruling servant, the deacon a distribu-

ting servant. But when the preacher preaches, he performs a special kind of service which is distinguishable from those discharged by the ruling elder and the deacon. When the word, therefore, is used to designate this particular sort of service, it passes from the general to the special sense. When, for example, the apostles said, We will give ourselves to the service of the word and not to the service of the tables, they evidently contrasted one special form of service with another special form. The general notion of service was in one case limited and specialised by the particular function of preaching, in the other by that of distributing. The preacher, the ruling elder, and the deacon (proper), are all servants in the general sense, but at the same time each is a servant in a special and narrow sense. There are then three special senses of the terms, corresponding with the three distinct kinds of service performed by the three classes of church officers, as they are distributed by our Constitution. Why, then, have the terms passed into technical designations of the distributing officer and his functions? Because, we conceive, the functions of preaching and ruling do not, in themselves, express the idea of service, but of its opposite—authority. The acts of teaching and ruling imply the superiority of the teacher and the ruler to those who are taught and ruled. It is not so with the function of distribution. In itself considered, it expresses inferiority and service. Hence it is with propriety that he is technically termed deacon, a servant; he is emphatically a servant and nothing more. There is no other idea suggested by his office.

Now it is obvious, that while every church officer includes in himself the general attribute of service, the special function of service discharged by each officer excludes that of every other officer. The preacher, as preaching servant, is not ruling servant nor distributing servant; and the ruling elder, as ruling servant, is not preaching nor distributing servant. This plain distinction the apostles affirmed, when they declared that because they were preaching servants, it was not proper for them to act as table-servants. Preaching and ruling deacons are not *ex officio* distributing deacons.

We have thus shown, first, that the reviewer's argument is inconsistent with itself, because at times it maintains that there is but one ecclesiastical sense in which the word *deacon* and its cognates are employed in Scripture, and at other times that there are two; secondly, that on the supposition that he intended to maintain but one sense, the view is untenable; and, thirdly, that, on the supposition that he designed to maintain two senses, he involves himself in concessions fatal to his argument, and, moreover, to the extent of his asserting a wide sense, his reasoning is chargeable with irrelevancy, as proving what we had formally admitted.

There is, however, one part of the argument derived from Scripture testimony which, in itself considered, we acknowledge to be relevant to the question at issue. It is that in which, regarding the term *deacon* in its narrow and special sense, he endeavors to prove that the apostles and elders discharged strictly diaconal functions, and that, therefore, the higher office includes the lower. It is remarkable that this which was the main thing to be proved is despatched in a few sentences. In reference to this point we have to say, that the arguments which were employed by us to disprove the position that the apostles, after the Church was organized, acted as distributing deacons, are not noticed by the reviewer. We are, consequently, under no necessity to repeat or fortify them. But as the reviewer cites certain places of Scripture as so indubitably sustaining his view that he righteously asks how any one can dare to dispute it, we will briefly give the reasons of our temerity. Upon the passage in the sixth chapter of Acts, he says: "Manifestly the apostles before the ordination of deacons performed these functions as part of their pastorate."¹ Manifestly there is no proof that can be furnished for this assertion. It behooved him, before speaking so confidently, to disprove the position of those who argue that there must, previously to the appointment of the seven, who, if we may judge from their names and the reason of their appointment, were Hellenists, have been Hebrew dea-

¹P. 363.

cons who served the Hebrew Christians. Suppose we ask, whether the apostles may not have regarded it as unreasonable for them to leave the word of God and serve tables before the appointment of the seven ? The question is at least worthy of consideration. But supposing that the apostles did perform strictly diaconal service before the seven were appointed, did they perform that service afterwards ? No; they refused. And if they affirmed that it was not right for them to act as deacons proper, after deacons proper were certainly in existence, how, we beg to know, does their example prove that it is right for ministers of the word to act as deacons, when deacons are in existence ? We submit, then, that it is not as manifest as the reviewer thinks that the apostles ever did act as deacons proper, and that it is perfectly manifest that they did not act as deacons proper after such deacons were appointed. But, argues the reviewer, there is proof that the apostles did, after this, act as deacons proper toward the poor saints, and that, too, in this very city of Jerusalem where there certainly were such deacons in office. If, indeed, the Scriptures prove this, they would prove that in Jerusalem where the apostles declared that it was not proper for them to deacon tables, they did that improper thing. Antecedently to an examination of the passages construed as proving this extraordinary fact, we would be slow to accept such a construction. Can it be that Paul, because he was not there when the apostles made the declaration referred to, did not feel himself bound by it ? Hardly would any one espouse such a supposition.

Let us look at the proofs. We select the strongest passage as a specimen. “ Paul says (Rom. xv. 26), ‘But now I go to Jerusalem *to deacon unto the saints*, for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.’ ” Now, first, how did Paul get this contribution ? Did he act as deacon proper in collecting it? He did not. 1 Cor. xvi. 2 : “Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering (*λογίσαι*, collections) when I come.” Did he act as deacon proper in distributing it?

He did not. Acts xi. 29 : “ Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea ; which also they did and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” No doubt in this case also, as well as in that of Antioch, the apostle carried the contribution to the elders at Jerusalem. Now, if the apostle deposited the contribution in the hands of the elders, it is clear that he did not distribute it—that he did not do the improper thing of deaconing tables. But it is not at all likely that the elders distributed it. It was their province to direct the distribution ; it was the duty of the deacons to do the distribution. So that between the apostle and the actual recipients of the bounty came the elders and the deacons. He was two removes from the distribution. So far there is not a particle of proof that Paul acted as deacon proper. Oh, but it is declared expressly that he went to Jerusalem to deacon to the saints! Very true; but we have seen that there are two senses of the word deacon; and that Paul did not deacon in the narrow sense, is proved by the fact that the elders were in the habit of receiving contributions from other places. Paul ministered to the poor saints by carrying the money to their elders in Jerusalem, but there is no proof that he deaconed to them by putting it into their hands.

But did not Paul act as deacon proper by carrying the money to Jerusalem ? We see no reason for such a supposition. When a church now sends through the mail money to the relief of a sister church in a distant place, are the mail-agents deacons ? Or if, for cautionary reasons, it be sent by the hands of a trustworthy messenger, must the messenger be a deacon ? And should the messenger be a minister, does the office he discharges prove him a deacon ? When, then, the Achaian and Macedonian churches sent money to Jerusalem by the safe hands of an apostle, did that prove him to be a deacon proper? Against this supposition we plead the apostolic declaration : “ It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.” We must hold with the apostles even though the reviewer differs from them. They said that it was not “reason,” or, as the reviewer puts it, not “right,” for them to serve tables. The reviewer thinks it was.

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Doctors differ; and we will be pardoned for leaning to those who are inspired. Such is the unanswerable proof which one dares not dispute, that the apostles acted as distributors of alms, and therefore that the higher office of presbyter includes the lower office of deacon !

It has been sufficiently evinced by this discussion that, if there be a valid argument from Scripture against our position, the reviewer has not presented it. We rest in our former conclusion, that, in a formed and regular condition of the Church in which all the offices are filled, the higher offices of preacher and ruling elder do not so include the lower office of deacon as to make it legitimate for preachers and ruling elders to discharge the functions of deacons. We have admitted that, in an irregular condition of the Church in which there are no deacons, it is not only warrantable but necessary that such of the higher officers as exist should perform the functions properly pertaining to deacons. Where deacons exist, we insist upon conformity to the distinctly enunciated principle of the apostles, that spiritual officers should be confined to spiritual functions, and temporal officers should alone be assigned to temporal.

II. We next encounter the reviewer's argument upon purely logical grounds to overthrow the position, that the higher office does not include the lower, and to establish the opposite doctrine. He promised us the rattle of the dry bones of logic. We will not deny that the bones were dry, nor that their rattle astonished us ; but we trust that we were not slain by them, though wielded by a giant. What little strength we have left will be exerted to prove that we are not dead. We shall not attempt to follow the reviewer in all the sinuosities of his subtle ratiocination, but shall seek to be guided by one or two plain admitted rules, as criteria of the correctness or fallacy of the conflicting arguments.

At the outset, we assume that the reviewer allows a logical classification of church-officers, and only objects to the use we have made of it. He says : "Church-officer is the common name of presbyters and deacons." The common name symbolises the generic concept, church-officers, under which fall the narrower concepts, presbyters and deacons. We are entitled, then, to

treat the wider as a genus and the narrower as species. For it is plain that the general concept, church-officers, does not merely collect under it individual church-officers, but classes of officers. The concepts presbyter and deacon collect individuals into classes, and are therefore lower genera or species. We have then church-officers as the genus under which presbyters and deacons are contained as species.

We admit what the reviewer has said; that logic does not directly deal with the truth or the falsity of the matter which it uses. But in religious questions, it is of the last importance that the matter be true; and as the question under consideration is one of that nature, we are bound to look to material truth. Logic, therefore, is by no means the only instrument we employ in this inquiry. Our inferences may be ever so correct, logically, but if the matter of the concepts and the judgments be untrue, we will only be logically conducted to religious error. Logic would be content with arbitrary symbols representing the respective church-officers, but we could not. We must know *what* these symbols represent, or in a question like this, logic becomes impiety. Happily for us, we have, in the present instance, a sure guide as to the truth of the matter involved. The word of God tells us what the church-offices and church-officers are, and what are the attributes and functions which belong to them—both the objects denoted and the marks which they connote. It gives the concepts of the real things, and their real properties and functions. In a word, it furnishes the matter both in the quantity of extension and that of intension.

But this is not all which Scripture does : it gives us a good deal of the logic also. It furnishes a classification of church-officers. It distributes them into the two general classes of extraordinary and ordinary officers. Then taking the class of ordinary officers, it gives us the classification of them which we have adopted and incorporated, as it was our duty to do, in our Constitution. Else, how did we get the classification ? On what other authority could we have made it? Using the principle of function as a basis, it collects teaching officers into one class, ruling officers into another class, and distributing officers into still

another. And, as Presbyterians think, it proceeds further, and groups ruling officers into a class under which are coordinated the two classes of presbyters who preach and presbyters who only rule. And then it goes on to lay down inferences, which grow out of this classification of officers and this distribution of functions. It is true that it does not use the technical terms of logic, but its procedures are logical. Would we charge it with being illogical ? Although no little ridicule in high quarters has been poured on the employment of the terms of logic to express this scriptural classification of church-offices, we fail to see why, in a formal and thorough-going discussion, in which clearness and accuracy are certainly important qualities, they may not, under proper limitations, be used. These terms also serve the office of preventing tedious circumlocution. But whatever may be the expediency or in expediency of using them, we have, owing to the nature of the argument in hand, no option but to employ them. We are shut up to this, or to silence.

Our Constitution distributes the general class, church-officers, into the three special classes, ministers of the word, or, to use one term, preachers, ruling elders, and deacons. We shall continue to call the general class a genus, and to denominate as species the three classes which, although discriminated from each other, are collected and coordinated under it. Usage has distinguished between these special classes of officers as higher and lower, or greater and less. We shall not pause to vindicate these distinctions, but assume them as generally admitted. The question before us is, whether the higher (or greater) offices of preacher and ruling elder include the lower (or less) office of deacon. The reviewer affirms, we deny. Taking then the class church-officers as a genus, and the lower classes, preachers, ruling elders, and deacons, as species contained under it, we lay down, in the first place, the rule: that, in the quantity of extension, each species is included under the genus, and that, in the quantity of intension, each species includes the essential attribute of the genus, together with at least one peculiar attribute of its own, and excludes the peculiar attributes of every other species contained with it under the same genus. As we suppose that the validity

of this rule will not be challenged, we may proceed to apply it to the case in hand. Each of the species is included under the genus: consequently, each of the species, preachers, ruling elders, and deacons, is included under the genus church-officers. That this will hardly be disputed will be evinced by simply translating the proposition into ordinary language: each of the special classes, preachers, ruling elders, deacons, is included in the general class church-officers. But each of the species includes the essential attribute of the genus: so, each of the species, preachers, ruling elders, deacons, includes the essential attribute of the genus, church-officers. Now, what is that essential attribute? It is agreed that it is ministry or service; words which are generally translations of the original word which is literally rendered deaconship, although sometimes of another (*λειτουργία*). As these terms *ministry* and *service* are synonymous, they will be used interchangeably; and let it be borne in mind that we qualify them by the adjectives, ecclesiastical and official. It is ecclesiastical, official ministry or service, which is the essential attribute of all church-officers. The term ministry or service, expressing this essence of the genus, we have employed, and still employ, in a wide and general sense. But we have shown that the reviewer sometimes uses them in that sense, and sometimes in a narrow and special sense as designating the distributing ministry or service of the deacon. To avoid confusion we must proceed first upon the supposition that he employs the terms in two senses, a general and a special, and secondly upon the supposition that he uses only one sense, the special.

First, then, let us suppose that he employs the terms in the general sense to express the essential attribute of the genus, church-officers, and in the special sense to designate the attributes of deacons as one of the species contained under the genus; that is to say, that the terms in the general sense indicate the generic conception of ministry, without reference to any particular kind of ministry, and, in the special sense, the specific conception of ministry as a distributing ministry. Now, acting upon this supposition, let us proceed to apply that part of our rule which demands that the essential attribute of the genus

should be included in each of the species contained under it. The essential attribute of the genus, church-officers, being ministry considered generally, it is included in each of the species, preachers, ruling elders, and deacons. The preachers are ministers, so are the ruling elders, and so, the deacons. All include the attribute ministry, and therefore all are ministers. But each of the species must be distinguished from every other species by at least one peculiar attribute, which is thence denominated a specific attribute. Now what are the peculiar attributes of these species ? That of preachers is preaching, that of ruling elders, ruling, that of deacons, distributing. Each species includes the essential property of ministry, but each, in addition, possesses a specific property of its own. This specific property stamps the peculiar kind of ministry which attaches to each of the species.

Let us go on further, to apply the final element of our rule: each species excludes the peculiar attributes of every other species contained with it under the same genus. According to this requirement, the species, preachers, excludes the peculiar attributes of the other species, ruling elders and deacons; that of ruling elders excludes the peculiar attributes of the other species, preachers and deacons; and that of deacons excludes the peculiar attributes of the other species, preachers and ruling elders. But we have seen that the peculiar attribute of deacons as a species is distributing. The species preachers and ruling elders must, consequently, exclude the peculiar attribute of distributing. By this short, clear, process we reach the conclusion that the higher (or greater) offices of preachers and ruling elders do not include the lower (or less) office of deacons. Let it be observed, that preachers and ruling elders include the deacon, considered in the general sense of minister: that is, they include the essential attribute of deaconship, contemplated in the general sense of ministry out of connexion with any particular kind of ministry. But at the same time they do not include the deacon, considered in the special sense of a minister charged with a special function; that is, they do not include the specific attribute of distributing, as a particular kind of ministry. This conclusion is certainly

enforced by the rule under consideration, on the supposition that preachers, ruling elders, and deacons may be treated as 3 species contained under the genus church-officers; and on the supposition, further, that the word *deacon* and its cognates are used in both a general and a special sense.

The reviewer charges us with confounding the logical quantities of extension and intension, or at least with leaving out of account the latter quantity. What we said in this relation was briefly put. We will be more full and definite. In the quantity of extension, objects are denoted. Well, in that quantity, the objects here denoted are church-officers; and since preachers, ruling elders, and deacons, are particular kinds of church-officers, they as objects are, in the same quantity, included under the genus. In the quantity of intension, attributes are connoted in objects. When objects compose species, the first attribute which must be designated as their mark is the essential attribute of the generic objects which is included in them. In addition to this, there must be other attributes as marks, which as being peculiar distinguish one species from another under the same genus. Well, we hold that, in the quantity of intension, preachers, ruling elders, and deacons, include the essential attribute of ministry (in the general), and in addition, possess peculiar attributes which distinguish them one from another as species. All these attributes, the essential and the specific, make up the connotation of their marks.

Thus we show, that, in the quantity of extension, preachers, ruling elders, and deacons (proper), are included under deacons, as generic ministers; and that in the quantity of intension, preachers, ruling elders, and deacons, all, include the deacon, as generic minister, but that, in the same quantity, preachers and ruling elders exclude the deacon, as specific minister. We neither confound the quantities, nor omit one of them.

But it may be said that as the deacon includes the essential attribute of the generic class, church-officers, and the other officers include the same attribute, they must to that extent include the deacon. Yes, to that extent; but to that extent, the deacon, for the same reason, would include the other officers; and that would be proving too much. But what sort of inclusion would that be?

It amounts only to the possession of a common property by all the officers, and that a generic one indicating no definite kind of ministry. The question is, Do the other officers include the peculiar property of the deacon—do they include the deacon as distributor, so as to make it legitimate for them to distribute? The answer is, no. They exclude the deacon, as distributor. The opposite view leads to contradiction. For, if the other officers include the deacon, as distributor, they include his peculiar and specific attribute of distributing, which would then of necessity be a common and generic attribute. The same attribute would at the same time be both peculiar and common, specific and generic. In order to set this matter in a clear light we will employ the illustration repeatedly adverted to by the reviewer. The species man and brute are included under the genus, animal. Consequently, the essential attribute of the genus, viz., animality, is included in each of the species. But who would say that because animal is included in man, therefore the species, brute, is included in the species, man? What makes man and brute species relatively to each other? Their specific marks. One of those characterising man as contradistinguished from the brute is the faculty of speech—he is a speaking animal. One of those characterising the brute is dumbness—he is a dumb animal. Now to say that the brute is included in man is to say that he is, as dumb, so included. And then by virtue of this conclusion we have man a dumb, speaking animal! The same fallacy is perpetrated when we say that one species of church officers is included in another species. Because the genus church officer is included in the preacher, it does not follow that the species ruling elder and deacon are included in him, or because church officer is included in the ruling elder, it does not follow that the species deacon is included in him. If we affirm that the preacher, as such, includes the ruling elder, as such, we maintain that the preacher is a church officer who only preaches and only rules; for preaching only is the peculiar mark of the preacher, and ruling only, that of the ruling elder. But that would involve the same contradiction as saying that man is a speaking animal who is dumb. If we take the ground that the preacher, as such,

includes the deacon, as such, we hold that the preacher is an officer who only preaches and only distributes. If we say that the ruling elder includes the deacon, we say that the ruling elder only rules and only distributes, that he is only a ruler, and no ruler. If it be urged, that the preacher also rules, we simply deny. The preaching elder preaches and also rules, but the preacher and the preaching elder are not one and the same. The preacher never rules. When he preaches, he only preaches; when he rules, he only rules. As preacher he belongs to a different specific class from himself as ruling elder. But we shall encounter that question further on.

Up to this point the argument has proceeded upon the supposition that the reviewer employed the term deacon, with its cognates, in more than one ecclesiastical sense; that the wider was used as generic, and the narrower as specific. We hold that to be the scriptural usage, and have therefore developed at length the inferences deductible from it. But the supposition is more probable that the reviewer used the terms in only one ecclesiastical sense. The general strain and tenor of his argumentation sustain that supposition, while some of his explicit utterances appear to represent it as the only possible one. It is necessary, therefore, to consider the case as regulatively affected by that supposition. The narrow or special sense of diaconal ministry, according to the reviewer, is the distribution of alms to the poor. The deacon, whenever he appears, is the distributor of alms to the poor. Now as Scripture denominates all church officers deacons, and their ministry a deaconship, it would follow necessarily that all church officers are distributors, and their ministry a distribution of alms to the poor. According to this view, the primary and fundamental idea of all church office is that it is a diaconate in the definite sense of ministry to the bodies of the poor. Other church offices are secondary and superinduced upon this original and fundamental office of a distributing deaconship. Whatever else, holds the reviewer, any church officer may be, "all are deacons"—deacons in the sense of distributors of relief to the poor. One special sense thus obviously becomes the generic sense in which all church officers are to be taken. The re-

duction, then, is this: deacons, or distributing church officers, constitute the general class—the genus; the essential attribute is official distribution : *under* this genus are included the special classes—the species, preachers, ruling elders, deacons; and, of course the essential attribute, official distribution, is included *in* each of the species. The preacher is official distributor, with the superadded property of preaching; the ruling elder is official distributor, with the superadded property of ruling ; the deacon is official distributor, with no superadded property. In this reduction, the deacon would be simple distributor, as in that of preachers and ruling elders under the class, presbyters, the ruling elder is simple ruler.

Now, it must be admitted that if this classification of church officers be correct, the fact is at once established that the diaconal function of distribution is included among the functions of all church officers. The essential attribute of distribution would, necessarily belong to them all. And we pause here to call attention to the great, the controlling, importance of our views as to the classification of the officers of the Church, in their bearing upon the relations of church offices and church officers to each other, and upon their respective places in the economy of the Church. Brethren may make sport of this as “hair-splitting,” but it is hair-splitting, the consequences of which run through the whole administrative policy of the Church. It is thinking, ay, and abstract thinking too, which determines, and from the nature of the case must determine, practice both in the ecclesiastical and in the secular sphere. Some creed is absolutely indispensable. Returning to the theory under consideration, we hold that it is wholly incapable of justification.

In the first place, the validity of the theory rests entirely upon the proof that the Scriptures use the term deacon and its derivatives in a single sense, that of distributor and distribution of alms to the poor. It has been already shown by a citation of his own language that the reviewer allows of two senses—a general and a special. But to the extent to which he concedes two senses, he crucifies a theory founded purely upon a sole sense. Now the Scriptures *do* employ the terms in two senses—wider and nar-

rower; and, therefore, the theory based upon the existence of only one sense falls to the ground as unscriptural. For the proofs of this position, as it would be tedious even to recapitulate them, we refer to the discussion under the preceding head.

In the second place, it is pure extravagance to maintain that the distributing office is radical and fundamental, and that the other offices presuppose it and are superinduced upon it. It is not a scriptural conception, that, either in the order of thought or of time, the distributing deacon preceded the preacher and the ruling elder. Is it not as plain as day that the preacher of the gospel came first, that believers, as constituting the material of the church, must, upon a reception of the truth preached, have been first collected before provision could be instituted for their bodily wants? The order, beyond question, was the gathering of professors of the faith by means of preaching, and then the organisation of a government over them, and the making of systematic provision for their temporal necessities. This theory would represent the apostles and other ministers of the church as distributing to the bodily wants of poor saints, before they existed as saints—an extraordinary prolepsis, it must be confessed!

In the third place, as, according to this theory, the essential attribute of distribution is included in the offices of preaching elder and ruling elder, those officers are bound by virtue of their ordination vows to perform the essential and indispensable function of distributing alms to the poor. It is not enough to say that they may; they must. It is not a case of potentiality, it is one of binding duty. As preaching elders are essentially rulers, they are obligated to discharge the function of rule. Their duty is to be in sessions, in presbyteries, in synods, and, when appointed, in assemblies, and to take part actually in their proceedings. So, if preaching and ruling elders are essentially distributors, they must perform the actual duty of distribution. There is no escape. But this is not the Presbyterian conception of their offices. If it be, innumerable preaching and ruling elders are living in the habitual neglect of duty and infraction of ordination vows.

This theory of the reviewer is all the more remarkable, as he says, in regard to the passage in the sixth chapter of the Acts: "It is conceded on all hands, that we have here the history and occasion of the institution of the diaconate." But, according to the reviewer's theory, the apostles were deacons in the sense of distributors. "Manifestly," says he, "the apostles, before the ordination of deacons, performed these functions as part of their pastorate." Well, then, the apostles discharged the duties of a distributing diaconate, but they instituted a distributing diaconate when they called on the people to elect the seven. There were distributing deacons before that time; there were none before that time! No, the reviewer will say, this is a misapprehension of my meaning; what I mean is, that a special class of officers was for the first time set apart to the function of distribution alone. But that could not be the institution of an office which, according to him, existed before. Allowing this exposition, however, did not these holy men continue to perform their essential and inalienable function of distributing to the wants of the poor? Oh, no, rejoins the reviewer, they retired from the discharge of that duty, and contented themselves with seeing it well done by others. "The apostles declared to the church that it was not right for them to 'deacon tables' at the cost of neglecting the word of God; whereupon the seven were elected and ordained and charged with this business; and the apostles, thus relieved, adhered to or persevered in 'prayer and the deaconing of the word.'" "They, therefore, by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, moved, and the church adopted the motion, to appoint distributing agents for the efficient performance of this duty of the body towards the poorer members; while they themselves kept the general oversight and control of the work."¹ Remarkable utterances! All church officers, whatever else they may be, are distributing deacons. The apostles were distributing deacons. The essential function which they had to perform was distributing alms to the poor. But they declared that it was not right for them to discharge this radical and essential function. So they rolled it off upon others who were appointed to perform it, and

¹ Pp. 362, 363.

retired from its burdens carrying with them the consciousness of a diaconal potentiality slumbering in their breasts. But complete recession from essential duties did not become apostles, and so they compensated for their neglect of this work by keeping a presbyterial “oversight and control” of it. That is to say, they continued to perform the duties of deacons by discharging those of presbyters! For the oversight and control of strictly diaconal ministration belongs to rulers, and not to deacons as distributors. Enough, we think, has been said to show the untenableness of the extraordinary theory, that all church officers, as distributing deacons, constitute a general class under which as special classes all particular church officers may be reduced. Of one thing we feel satisfied, that if the doctrine of the inclusion of the lower office in the higher shall ultimately prove triumphant, it will not ride to victory on the shoulders of a theory that hops on one leg—the leg of a sole scriptural sense of the word deacon.

We have thus endeavored, in reply to the reviewer’s arguments, to show that the higher (or greater) offices of preaching and ruling do not include the lower (or less) office of distribution. But there is a view of this particular question which still remains to be considered. It is, that if it were conceded that these offices are, in themselves considered, mutually exclusive, they may nevertheless be regarded as coexisting in the same officer. The functions of no two of them could be discharged at the same time by the same person, but the same person could discharge them at different times. For example, while preaching and ruling are mutually exclusive functions, yet the offices of preaching and ruling coexist in the same officer—the preaching elder. In this way the preaching elder includes the ruling elder. Why may not, in the same way, the preaching elder and the ruling elder include the deacon?

This seems to oppose a serious difficulty to the doctrine for which we contend, and, although we have not seen it formally expressed, fairness and regard for the truth demand its consideration. It is necessary here to recall attention to the state of the question under discussion. As it was represented in the first article of this series, it “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 these functions. Where no deacons can be obtained, the elders ought to perform diaconal duties.” We have not resisted the view, properly restrained, of a “ virtual” comprehension of the lower office in the higher *officer*. What we have opposed is the comprehension, either virtual or actual, of the lower office in the higher *office* : ruling is not included in preaching, nor is distributing included in either preaching or ruling. Attention is again cited to the fact that the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church on this subject has not been uniform. It is idle for the reviewer, while depreciating the appeal to authority, to assert that he maintains “ the old view.” There were several old views. There was the old view of the English Puritans, of a virtual inclusion of the lower in the higher office, so that, in an irregular condition of the church in which no deacons exist, the higher officers may perform their functions. There is the old view of the Scotch Church, of an actual inclusion of the lower in the higher office, so that in a regular condition of the church in which deacons exist, the higher officers may discharge their duties. And there is the old view of the French, Belgic, and Dutch Churches, of an actual inclusion of the higher office in the lower, so that in a regular condition of the church, in which all the officers exist, deacons may sit in church courts and perform the functions of the presbyter. As between the views we lean to the English, properly qualified ; qualified, for instance, in this way: not that the lower office is virtually comprehended in the higher office, but that it is virtually comprehended in the higher officer. The question is not as to that doctrine, so qualified. Of course, we reject the Continental doctrine, as above stated. That, too, is out of the question. We also deny the Scotch doctrine, and it is as to that doctrine the question existed, so far as the previous part of this discussion is concerned. The question is not now whether the higher office includes the lower office, in a normal condition of the church.

But the precise question now is, whether there is an actual in-

clusion of the lower office in the higher office; whether, in a regular condition of the church, the mutually exclusive offices of presbyter and deacon are comprehended in the same man, so that, deacons existing, presbyters may perform their functions ? Does the person who is presbyter include the deacon, as the person who is minister of the word includes the elder ? In supporting the negative of this question we present the following considerations:

First, it cannot be proved by direct Scripture testimony, or by good and necessary consequence from it, that the persons who are preachers and ruling elders so include the deacon proper, as to legitimate their performance of his functions in a regular condition of the church. If this could be done, the question would be conclusively settled. If the Lord, in his sacred word, says that the offices of presbyter and deacon coexist in the same persons, we bow to his authority. Let that be proved to us, and there will be an end of controversy. Now, the word does explicitly say that the offices of apostle and presbyter coexisted in the same persons. The Apostle Peter puts that beyond question in these words: “ The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder.”¹ Show us a passage in which an apostle says, I am also a deacon, that is, a distributor, and we close the discussion, so far as the comprehension of the deacon proper in the apostle is concerned. This cannot be done. But it is said that the apostles discharged the functions of the deacon proper, and from this fact the inference is necessary that they comprehend in them the deacon proper. We have denied that this can be proved from Scripture and have given reasons for the denial, which, so far from having been refuted, have not even been considered. The peculiar function of the deacon proper is distribution. The proof of that is found in the sixth chapter of Acts. The deacons were appointed to serve tables. This function Presbyterian formularies call distribution. Now let the proof be produced that the apostles, in the organised condition of the church, served tables—that they performed the function of distribution. It cannot be done. And, until it is done,

¹ 1 Pet. v. 1.

we hold that the inference is groundless that the apostle comprehended the distributing deacon.

This is not all. It cannot be proved by explicit testimony of Scripture that the person who is presbyter comprehends the deacon proper. There is no passage which affirms that the presbyter is also deacon, as distributor. And still further, there is no passage which says that presbyters performed the function of distribution, from which the inference might be drawn that they comprehended the deacon proper. If there be, where is it? Is it that in which it is stated that Paul and Barnabas took the alms of the church of Antioch to the elders of the church at Jerusalem? But where is the proof that the elders distributed this contribution? There is none. If the elders at Jerusalem distributed, why were deacons appointed to distribute? If more distributors were needed, why were not more elders appointed on the supposition that elders distributed? Do elders distribute now, when they order a collection and direct the deacons to distribute it? No scriptural proof, either explicit or inferential, can be adduced for the position that he who is presbyter is also deacon proper.

Secondly, it can be proved by the explicit testimony of Scripture that, after the appointment of deacons, they who were apostles did not so comprehend the deacon proper in themselves, as to legitimate their performance of the distributing function. Once more we refer to the sixth chapter of Acts, and we must refer to it *usque ad nauseam*, as Luther said about his preaching justification by faith alone. The apostles declared that it was not reason that that they should leave the word of God and serve tables. Of course, then, they did not serve tables, or, what is the same thing, perform the function of the distributing deacon. Brethren who maintain that, after this, the apostles did perform the function of distributing deacons, seem to forget that they charge those "holy men of God" with leaving the word of God to serve tables, and so with violating their own rule and neglecting their own duties. As men, they sometimes erred in practice. Paul says that Peter dissembled at Antioch, and Paul himself had a sharp contention with his brother Barnabas; but surely

they did not err, as apostles, acting in their official capacity. Did they leave the word of God to do the collecting at Antioch and Corinth ? Did they leave it to do the distributing at Jerusalem ? We are confident they did not. Our doctrine files no indictment against the apostles for inconsistency. It harmonises their official acts with their avowed principle. To say that they had no time to serve tables when they uttered that declaration, but that they may have had time afterwards, looks very much like trifling with the subject. Did they ever get time to discontinue prayer and the ministration of the word? And as there were deacons at Jerusalem, and no doubt at Antioch and Corinth also, was there any necessity which required them to serve tables in those places ? The proof is clear that the apostles did not, in a regular condition of the church, perform the duties of the deacon proper.

That presbyters may, in a regular condition of the church, perform the functions of deacons, and that, therefore, they who are presbyters are also deacons, is an inference derived only from analogy; for there is no direct Scripture proof of the position. If the apostles, in a regular condition of the church, discharged those functions, so may presbyters; and if that fact proved the apostles to be deacons, for the same reason, are presbyters proved to be deacons. But we have shown that there is no such fact. The ground opens beneath the analogy, and the inference tumbles with it into the chasm. On the other hand, if the apostles did not perform those functions, and there be an analogy between their case and that of presbyters, the inference would go the other way—then may not presbyters discharge them.

The view which we are combating proceeds upon analogy in including the deacon proper in those who are preaching and ruling elders. The apostle was also an elder; therefore, the preacher is also an elder and the elder is also a deacon proper. But it deserves to be considered, that we have a surer warrant than this for including the elder in him who is preacher, namely, the explicit statements of Scripture. There are passages in which the Apostle Paul expressly teaches this view. One is his salutation to the Philippian church: “ Paul and Timotheus, the
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servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹ Another is that, in which, writing to Timothy, he describes the qualifications of bishops and deacons.² A third is that in which he reminds Titus of his duty to ordain elders in every city, and in setting forth their qualifications urges their necessity for the reason that a bishop must possess them. “For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless,” etc.³ In this last passage, Paul identifies presbyters with bishops. Whatever then is affirmed of bishops is affirmed of presbyters. The bishops of the Philippian church were presbyters; the bishops whose qualifications are given in Timothy were presbyters. Their status and qualifications are the same. Now did the apostle embrace preachers in the class bishops or presbyters? Yea, answer all—Prelatists, Independents, and Presbyterians. Clearly then the apostle included in the same officer the preaching and the ruling office. The elder is thus plainly proved to be included in him who is preacher. Did the apostle embrace ruling elders simply in the class bishops or presbyters? Nay, answer Prelatists and Independents; yea, answer Presbyterians. They are with preachers included under the general class bishops or presbyters. The one subordinate class rule and also preach; the other rule and do not preach—they rule only. The essential attribute of rule is included in him who is preacher, and in that sense he who is preacher includes the elder. But the peculiar and differentiating property of preaching characterises the preacher, and that of ruling only, the ruling elder. These offices therefore exclude each other—the preaching office does not include the ruling office. But the ruling office co-exists with the preaching in the officer who is preaching elder.

The question now is, How will you include the deacon proper in him who is presbyter? If with preachers and ruling elders

¹ Phil. i. 1.

² 1 Tim. iii. 1—13.

³ Tit. i. 5—9.

he belonged to the class, presbyters, he would be a presbyter with the peculiar property of distribution ; and then preaching and ruling elders would include him as ruler, while excluding him as distributor. But the apostle assigns deacons to a different class from presbyters, a class differentiated by peculiar qualifications fitting them for the discharge of peculiar functions. They who are presbyters neither include deacons as rulers nor as distributors. The positive weight of these passages is against the inclusion of deacons, as distributors, in the officers who are presbyters. The only conceivable way in which such an inclusion can be effected, is the extraordinary one of the reviewer, namely, by making deacons, as distributors, a still higher class than presbyters, by making them indeed the highest class, coincident with church officers, and including under them the two subordinate classes, presbyters and deacons. In that case, as presbyters would include the essential attribute, distribution, descending from the generic class, distributors, they would in that way include the deacon. But this is a desperate shift, without the least support from Scripture, as has been proved under the first head of this discussion. The theory of the inclusion of the deacon in the presbyter must throw itself back into the arms of apostolic analogy, the last consolations of which we commend to it in its extremity.

Thirdly, we again press the unanswered argument from ordination. Neither the preacher nor the ruling elder is ordained to perform the function of distribution. If he were, as ordination is always to a definite work and imposes a solemn obligation to its discharge, he would be bound actually to perform the duties of the distributing deacon. But he neither discharges them nor is expected to discharge them. He is, therefore, not ordained to perform them. If, however, the preacher and the ruling elder include the deacon, they must when ordained as preacher and ruling elder be also ordained as deacon. But they are not. If it be said that they are implicitly ordained as deacons, since the higher office includes the lower, ordination to the higher being virtual ordination to the lower, we reply: that it has been unanswerably shown that the higher office does not include the

lower. From a Presbyterian point of view it is unwarrantable to affirm that preaching includes ruling, and ruling, distributing. Nor can they be implicitly ordained as deacons because the higher officer comprehends in himself the lower office. Implicit ordination, that is, ordination to an office to which no allusion is made in the ordaining act, would be a curious anomaly. It may be said that that is done in the ordination of the minister of the word, that he is implicitly ordained as ruling elder. We cannot admit it. He is explicitly ordained to the pastoral office, and that embraces the functions of ruling elder. No; preachers and ruling elders are not ordained to the office of distributing deacon, and that fact disproves the position that they include that office. We have overpassed the limits assigned us, and must suspend the discussion at this point. We have endeavored to show not only that the lower office of deacon proper is not included in the higher *offices*, but that, in a regular condition of the church, there is no actual inclusion of that office in the higher *officers*. There remain to be considered the reviewer's positions in regard to the relations of presbyters and deacons, as orders, and the nature of the church as excluding a secular element.