

to maintain this character it will be found that the Deacon's office is a wise and salutary, if not an essential institution.

From these remarks the proper range of duty for Deacons may be easily gathered, and will be seen to be onerous and extensive. For let it only be remembered that the whole machinery of the church, whether at home or abroad, whether for advancing christianity where it has been planted, or extending it to the dark places of the earth, depends on its temporalities. Though, doubtless, the great Head of the church could easily employ the ministration of angels to proclaim salvation, yet it is His pleasure to constitute so close a connection in this world between spiritual and temporal things and to make the success of his gospel depend so much on outward instrumentality, that it is usually in proportion as temporal means are furnished with reasonableness, liberality and zeal, that Christianity is found to prosper through the blessing of God. Deacons are thus a class of office-bearers whose peculiar province is to enlighten the Christian people on this subject, and to regulate and superintend their efforts, to receive, protect and apply the whole contributions of the church, as they find it best for the glory of Christ, and the interests of religion; and not only so, but they should themselves be patterns and prompters of Christian liberality and zeal,—that Christ's kingdom may not only be preserved and promoted at home, but may be prosperously extended over the habitable earth.

How erroneous is the notion, that Deacons have nothing more to do than look after the poor of their own congregations! If this were all, they would often have nothing to do, for in many congregations there are no poor. But the views suggested seem to intimate that the office of Deacon is much more ample and elevated than is generally supposed; and that those who hold it have weightier duties to discharge, which will require all their attention, energy and zeal. Had it been only to take care of the poor, and, in particular, to see that the widows were not neglected in the daily ministration, that these office-bearers were appointed, we cannot see why it was necessary that they should be men of such extraordinary endowments as described in scripture. It appears that this office was found necessary when the church was in a state of rapid growth, and when its extension over the whole earth was zealously contemplated. Never was the Christian church more practically of the character of a missionary church than when this office was appointed. And what were the Deacons to do? Whilst they were to attend to the necessities, both outward and spiritual, of their associates at hand, they were to look around, that they might discover the destitution which prevailed in more distant regions; they were to cast an eye of holy zeal over the exigencies of the whole church, nay, over the spiritual wants of the world at large, and both report these to the Christian office-bearers and people with whom they were more closely connected, and suggest, and endeavour to provide the best means of affording relief. The widows of the Grecians, it seems, were neglected in the daily ministration. This was not because there was no provision for them, or because there was partiality in the distribution, but because there was