

Mr. Mayerhoffer will be able satisfactorily to explain the grounds of these imputations; but again must we protest against the injustice of rendering any public journal the vehicle of such anonymous attacks against that most precious property of man, his fair fame;—an injustice by no means diminished, if it be begotten, as it too often is, by the influence of prejudice, either religious, national or political.

We have some fear that a delay may occur in the issue of our next number in consequence of the non-arrival of the residue of our supply of paper for the present volume. This was purchased in February last, and was to have left Montreal on the 20th ulto. and we can in no other way account for the delay than by supposing that the forwarding arrangements for the season were not completed at the time the paper was to have been sent.

OFFICE OF A DEACON.

(Extracted from Rt. Rev. Bishop Hopkins' address to the Convention of the Diocese of Vermont.—September, 1837.)

There is another subject which it may be well to present to your attention, and through the medium of our Journal, to that of the Church at large, inasmuch as I may perhaps bring it forward at the next General Convention, which will meet before we shall again assemble together. It is the serious question of the qualifications and character of the third order in the ministry—the Deacon of our Church, which has become in our days a very different office from that which our doctrine contemplates—an office, in sober truth, not precisely in accordance with the practice of the primitive Church, nor with our own excellent form of ordination.

In the original inception of this office, it is clear that it was designed to be a branch of the ministry, because it was instituted to bear a part of the apostolic burden. The number of the disciples had increased until the care of distributing to the poor widows of the flock was in part neglected, and a murmuring arose in consequence. The apostles then directed seven men to be chosen, whom they should appoint over this business, for it is not meet, said they, "that we should leave the word of God and serve tables," plainly shewing, that it had been considered part of their duty previous, but that now the labour had so much increased that a proper attention to it was inconsistent with the higher and more imperative portion of their sacred duty, prayer and the ministry of the word.

Seven men are accordingly chosen, the apostles ordain them by the laying on of hands, and they are presently found preaching and baptizing. From that time, the church seems to have been supplied with this, as a distinct, standing order. The very number seven was continued in the Church of Rome, as we learn from the letter of Cornelius the Bishop of Rome, to Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, about the middle of the third century. And the ancient writers frequently speak of them as preserving order among the congregation in time of public prayer, as standing near the presbyters, as making proclamations in the Church, as having the care of the poor, and in other ways assisting the higher ministry, the presbyters and bishops, in their several vocations.

Pursuing faithfully the track of the primitive Church, our own ordination service considers the Deacon as an assistant to the Priest, and no more, except on extraordinary emergencies. "It appertaineth to the office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve," saith the Bishop in the questions which the ordinal obliges him to address to the candidates, "to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and especially when he ministereth the Holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof; and to read the Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church, and to instruct the youth in the catechism, and in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants; and preach if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop. And furthermore it is his office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the parish; to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the parishioners, or others: "Will you do this, gladly and willingly?"—And the candidate answers, "I will so do; by the help of God." But when and where do we find the deacon occupied according to this primitive view of his office? Nowhere, that I have seen, within the bounds of our communion. Instead of this, our deacons are always considered qualified to preach, without exception. They are sent forth as missionaries to organize and take charge of congregations. Their practical duties are regarded much as if they were presbyters, excepting only that they have not the authority to administer the Eucharist. And indeed the diaconate is looked upon not as a standing order, in the Church, appointed to assist the Priest, but as a preparatory grade; leading in all cases to the priesthood. Hence, no one now becomes a deacon unless he intends to be a Priest; and the theological literary qualifications which our Canon lays down as necessary for assuming this first grade in the ministry, are so perfectly identified with those which the grade of priesthood demands, that the examination for the priest's office is little more amongst us than a matter of form.

Now it has long appeared to my mind, that by the course of modern practice the substantial benefits of this third order of the apostolic ministry are almost lost to us, to the great injury of the Church, and the best interests of the Gospel. The catechizing of the youth, and especially the care of the poor, are cast upon the priest; and therefore are seldom attended to as they should be. The training up the children of the Church in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and the preaching of the Gospel to the poor, and the judicious and kindly supply of their bodily necessities, to which in primitive times, the order of deacons was devoted and which is still their duty by the very language of the ancient ordinal, are no longer, as they well deserve to be, in the first rank of the ecclesiastical constitution. Nor will they ever, I fear, be restored to their true and original estimation, until the Church adopts the primitive plan which attaches deacons together with priests, to the service of our congregations.

There are some objections, however, to this suggestion, which

require to be noted. First, it might be thought impracticable, because it would seem to demand double or triple the sum to support the ministry of each Church. To this the answer is, that the duties of the diaconate might be discharged by persons who derive their support from schools, or agriculture, or other avocations which are now frequently performed by the priesthood themselves. In very large and wealthy city churches, there would be no difficulty in supporting them without such aid, and generally through the country parishes, it would be easy to find some who would not need any salary whatever. At all events, this objection only regards the extent to which the plan could be applied. And this is a matter with which the Church has no concern, because it depends on the means which the Lord may bestow upon our people, and the disposition which they may manifest to use them.

In the second place it may be said, that the deficiency of laborers is now so great, that a plan requiring double the number would be plainly impracticable. The answer is, that this difficulty is partly created by ourselves, in placing the literary and theological qualifications for the deacon, as high as those which we demand for the priest. The priesthood is an office so much above the diaconate, that the qualifications necessary ought to be higher in proportion. The deacon must indeed be a man of respectable judgment, decided piety, and good character. In the words of Scripture, he should be "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom;" but I have never been able to discover the necessity for his possessing all the literary and theological requisites which our canon lays down. Hence I should think that our present extensive qualifications should be reserved for the priesthood, and there strictly and universally insisted on. But for the diaconate I should recommend a dispensing with any thing literary beyond a good English education. With this alteration, there would be candidates enough among persons of more age, more experience, and more established character than are of necessity, admitted amongst the students of theology, so that what might be lost in classical literature would be more than supplied by the qualities of far greater importance in the work of their ministry.

But this itself introduces another objection, derived from the fear that the ministry would be degraded in its general aspect by admitting into the first degree persons of inferior literary endowments. I answer, that this could never happen, so long as full qualifications were insisted upon without any exception for the office of the priest. Nay, so far from it, that a permanent class of the ministry, occupying in each parish a place between the people and the priest would tend to increase the general respect for the priestly office, and render its exercise much more effective and beneficial.

The last objection is, that our deacons, on the plan proposed, would resemble the Congregational deacon, and not be regarded as ministers at all. To which I reply, that their ministerial character does not depend on their literary qualifications, but upon their ordination for the performance of certain ministerial functions. Before the eyes of the congregation the distinction would be as visible as it is now, nor would it be possible to confound such different offices together.

The result of such a recurrence to primitive principle would, as it seems to me, give our priesthood a great increase of efficiency, by furnishing them with helpers, co-workers, and occasional substitutes during their necessary absence. To vacant or weak congregations, such a deacon would be able to do a service which no lay reading can supply, and for catechizing and taking care of the poor, he would do what is now too often unavoidably neglected. Indeed I have long thought that the prevailing prejudice against our Church, derived from the idea that it is not so well adapted to the wants of the poor as the other denominations, results chiefly from our having lost the peculiar labors of the deacon's office; and I should, therefore, hope for the best effects, if, under God, the primitive character of that office were found as perfectly in our practice as it is in our ordinal.

It would occupy too much time to enter fully into all the merits of this question. I shall, therefore, only add, that the plan contemplated is not original with me, but was suggested to my mind by the wisdom of the lamented Bishop White. Doubtless many of my brethren among the clergy are familiar with his opinions upon the subject, and would at once recognize the paternity of the proposed change.

From the Montreal Herald.

At a meeting of the congregation of the Parish of Christ's Church, in the city of Montreal, held in the church on the first day of May, 1838, it was represented to the meeting that a very great number of the poorer members of the congregation are in a deplorable state of temporal as well as moral and religious destitution; that the clerical provision for the parish is now and has long been inadequate to due attention to the wants of so large a population, and that there is no prospect of this deficiency being speedily supplied. It was therefore proposed and agreed to, as the only remedy which can at once be applied to this great and crying evil, that a society be now formed under the denomination of THE TEMPORAL AND PASTORAL AID SOCIETY OF THE PARISH OF CHRIST'S CHURCH, under the following general regulations:—

1st.—Every male member of the congregation who shall contribute not less than five shillings per annum to its funds, and every female member desirous of joining, shall be members of the Society.

2d.—The Rector of the Parish shall be President; the Assistant Minister or Ministers as the case may be, and two laymen chosen by the Society, shall be Vice Presidents. There shall also be a Treasurer and Secretary chosen by the members of the Society.

3d.—The Society shall meet on the second Wednesday of every month, in the Church or Vestry at two o'clock, P.M.—Special meetings may be called, on requisition, by the President, or in his absence, by one of the Vice Presidents.

4th.—The first duty of the Society shall be to provide a person or persons of suitable information, discretion, zeal and piety as a paid visitor, whose duty it shall be, under the direction of the Rector, to devote his whole time to the work of seeking out the members of the church, enquiring into their temporal and

spiritual wants, and reporting his or their proceedings to the Rector as often as he may require.

5th.—At every meeting of the Society the President or Vice President as the case may be, will submit to the meeting an abstract of the labours of the paid visitor.

6th.—The parish shall be divided into a number of wards, proportionate to the number of the members of the Society, so that there shall always be two visiting members for each ward.

7th.—It shall be the duty of the visiting members to visit their respective wards as often as possible within each month, assisted by the Reports of the paid visitor—enquiring first into the temporal wants of the poor of our church; and secondly into their moral and religious state—whether they are in possession of the Holy Scriptures and Prayer Book—whether they attend the public services of the Church—whether their children are baptised and are instructed in the catechism, and whether they attend the national and Sunday schools. It shall, moreover, be the duty of the visiting members to labour earnestly to impress upon the minds of those whom they visit, the great importance of attending to these and all other things which they ought to know and believe and do, to their soul's health, never omitting to read to them, if at all practicable, a portion of the word of God, adding such admonitions and advice as the answers to their previous enquiries may suggest as suitable. The visitors shall keep a journal of their proceedings, noting the names and residences of the persons visited, with such remarks as they may think necessary, to be submitted to the meetings of the Society; to the end that the temporal necessities of the poor may be relieved, and their spiritual wants supplied by the Society as far as possible.

8th.—No books or tracts shall be distributed by any member of the Society which shall not first have been approved of by the Rector or Assistant Minister.

9th.—There shall be a sub-committee of six members of the Society whose duty it shall be to collect subscriptions from all who are willing to contribute to its funds.

10th.—There shall also be a sub-committee of five members, three of whom shall form a quorum, who shall attend to the duty of supplying the temporal necessities of the poor and of inspecting all the accounts of the Society, and shall report to each monthly meeting.

11th.—Dr. Holmes, Col. Maitland, Mr. W. C. Meredith, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Arthur Ross, Dr. Hall and Mr. F. Penn were appointed collectors, and requested to proceed immediately in the execution of their task.

12th.—It was agreed that the Society meet on Wednesday the 16th instant, at two o'clock, for the purpose of appointing officers, dividing the city into wards, and taking such other measures as may be necessary for commencing the active operations of the Society.

ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT OF THE GOSPELS.

The Rev. J. H. Todd, gave lately to the Royal Irish Academy a short account of a Manuscript of the Four Gospels, of the seventh century, and in Irish characters, which is preserved in the Library of his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth. The volume is a small quarto, in the minute hand called *Caroline*, common to all Europe in the reign of Charlemagne, but now used only in Ireland, and known as the Irish character. The present volume appears to have belonged to Maelbrigid Mac Dornan, or Mac Tornan, who was Archbishop of Armagh, in the ninth century, and died A.D. 925. By him it was probably sent to Athelstan, King of the Anglo-Saxons, who presented it to the city of Canterbury. These facts are inferred from an inscription in Anglo-Saxon characters (and in a hand of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century), which occurs on a blank page immediately following the genealogy in the first chapter of St. Matthew. The discovery of this Manuscript and the satisfactory proof which facts afford of its Irish origin, are important, as adding another to the many instances with which we are already acquainted, of the employment of Irish scribes in the transcriptions of the Scriptures during the sixth and seventh centuries. It is now well ascertained that almost all the sacred books so highly venerated by the Anglo-Saxon Church, and left by her early bishops as heir-looms to their respective Sees, were obtained by Ireland or Irish Scribes.—*Athenæum*.

HORNS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

The allusion is frequent in Scripture to the horns of the righteous; and it is singular that at the present day the practice of wearing on the forehead a horn still exists in the east. After any particular achievement, the head of the victor is adorned with a large fillet, which is bound round and tied behind. In front projects a conical piece of silver gilt, or horn, not unlike our common candle extinguishers. It is called a *kirn*, and is always worn on great occasions as a mark of distinction, like the Waterloo medals, &c. on the breast. The propriety of its application to Christian heroes is obvious; and to say of such a man, that he is exalted with the horns of the righteous, only means, in other words, that he has attained some eminent piety, or some exalted pitch in holiness and virtue.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MIDLAND CLERICAL ASSOCIATION.

Rev. Brethren,—You are hereby reminded that the next meeting of the Midland Clerical Association will be held at BATH, on Wednesday, the twenty-third of the present month, at ten o'clock A. M.

I remain, Rev. Brethren,
Your faithful servant,
A. F. ATKINSON,
Secretary.

St. John's Parsonage,
Bath, May 8, 1838.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The very pleasing lines of E. D. in our next.
The poems from Loughboro' shall have an insertion.
"Tyro" is received.

LETTERS received to Friday May 11th:—

J. Stratton Esq. sub. in full for vol. I and 2;—P. M. Toronto, [whose request shall be attended to];—Rev. E. Denroche;—R. Athill Esq.;—Rev. A. F. Atkinson (2) with rem.;—Rev. W. F. S. Harper;—J. Kent Esq.;—Rev. Dr. Phillips.