

which appears to demand explanation on your part." In respect to this, it is evident that explanations, if necessary, should be given to the University rather than to me, as I have not authority to pronounce judicially, and my private opinion would have little weight in a matter on which any ordinary divine is qualified to judge for himself.

You further "state your readiness to receive any admonition from me as to the most effectual mode of discharging the office." This I conceive is unnecessary: you doubtless fully understand the nature of the instruction required from a professor of divinity in our church; and the system of teaching adopted by your immediate predecessor, the late Bishop of Oxford, and Dr. Burton has received the general approbation of the Church and the University. In the assurance that you will not suspect me of any unkind feeling, or want of personal respect towards you, I remain, Reverend Sir, your humble and obedient servant,

(Signed)

W. CANTUAR.

We some time since marked for insertion the following extract from a charge by Bishop Hopkins of Vermont, and are now reminded of it by seeing it in the pages of our able contemporary and fellow-worker—"The Church":—

OFFICE OF DEACON.

(Extracted from Rt. Rev. Bishop Hopkins' address to the Convention of the Diocese of Vermont.—Sept. 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 number 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 appertains 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 the 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 catechising 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 vocations 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 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 labourers 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 catechising 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.

BISHOP OF BOMBAY.

The Right Rev. the Bishop of Bombay arrived here from England late on Thursday evening in Her Majesty's steam-packet *Volcano*, from Gibraltar. His Lordship landed on Friday morning, and paid his respects to his Excellency the Governor, and the Commander in Chief of Her Majesty's Naval Forces; and in consequence of a request from the Archbishop of Canterbury immediately made preparations for holding a confirmation. In the evening divine service was read in the Government Chapel by the Rev. John Cleugh, after which the Bishop addressed the candidates for the holy rite. At ten o'clock on Saturday morning a very respectable congregation was present to witness the ceremony—the first of the kind performed by a Protestant Bishop in Malta. Considering the very short notice, it was gratifying to find that 119 persons were presented for confirmation. The Right Rev. Prelate, after the laying on of hands, delivered to them an appropriate and impressive discourse. His Lordship was assisted at the altar by the Chaplain to Government and the Chaplain to the Forces, as well as by the Chaplains of Her Majesty's Navy belonging to the ships now in port. Immediately after the ceremony the Bishop of Bombay embarked, under a salute from the batteries, on board Her Majesty's steam-packet *Firefly*, for Alexandria, on his way to his distant diocese. —*Malta Gazette*, Jan. 17, 1838.