

good works? Or shall a Layman without learning be able to do well what a Deacon cannot do without literature and science? The only duty which a Deacon may not discharge effectually without some degree of learning, is that of preaching; and this we must admit does not necessarily pertain to his office. However there often is great aptitude for wise and effective preaching when there is little learning of a scholastic or formal sort—often far more than any amount of mere learning can furnish. And where natural talents, prudence, and piety concur—then it would be well if unlearned Deacons were licensed by the Bishop to preach.

If in a large tract of new country an experienced Priest was set down with a number of such Deacons, to superintend their work, (and for a couple of years perhaps their readings,) so that they should be really assistants to the Priest and not themselves intrusted with independent care of souls, what a new and glorious future would be in store for our Church! The new ground would be by us preoccupied and cultivated. Speedily would settled congregations be organized, and that before the people were demoralized by schism, disheartened by neglect, or hardened by irreligion. Such of those Deacons too as had been thoroughly proved, and had honourably "purchased to themselves a good degree," would with justice and advantage be raised to that degree.

To this class of subordinate labours, the Deacons who proceed from our Colleges, and aspire immediately to the Priesthood, should for the twelve months of their Diaconate be somewhat strictly, if not rigidly confined.

*Second*.—But there is another form which the Diaconate may assume with advantage—a *local and more secular form*. I would have persons of discreet age, of fair intelligence, and whose integrity and piety would command the suffrages of their respective congregations, admitted to the Diaconate, in its most limited and strictly defined character. Such deacons should assist the Priest in Divine Service by reading lessons and prayers, administering the elements, superintending Sunday Schools, baptizing or burying in the Priest's absence; and on the Sundays on which the Priest is absent, they should read prayers and a sermon, as Lay Readers do now. And what farmer or blacksmith—not to mention schoolmasters, merchants, doctors or lawyers,—is not competent to do all this? What learning or intellect is requisite for it? But were it done, how mightily would our few overtasked Priests be supplemented, how blessedly would our poor desolate half-starved congregations be strengthened and enriched? I wish it to be particularly noted, that with the exception of assisting in the Sacraments, every ministry I have named is discharged by laymen at the present time. Why, then, should not those services be performed by Deacons? Or, can man's way of lay-catechists and lay-readers be better than God's way of commissioned servants? These local and secular Deacons, as they might be called, present the advantage of being almost everywhere attainable and inexpensive. There are not many congregations in which materials for a suitable Deacon could not be found—a person who would gladly on Sundays and

spare week-day hours, render valuable help. Nor would they think of receiving anything for their labours of love. "The Deacons," (of the Nestorian Christians) says Mr. Fletcher, an English Clergyman, who resided long in the East, "rarely receive anything, as they are generally merchants and men of business, from whom the Canons of the East do not require the surrender of their worldly calling, unless they wish to advance to the higher grade of the Priesthood." The details of the plans here suggested could doubtless be settled in a manner so wise and cautious, as to obviate as much as possible, whatever evils might inhere in such methods, or might arise temporarily from their novelty.

Let me here meet an objection which has been made, and is sure to be often and strongly reiterated, viz., that this scheme would lower the learning of the Clergy, and diminish the people's reverence for the Ministry. I maintain the contrary of both, i. e. as a final result. First, I ask, how is it possible for our overtasked Clergy to make any serious progress in learning, after they have been admitted to Holy Orders? Is it not true, that in most cases they rather go back in mere learning? How many have told me that they passed a far better examination for Deacons Orders than they did for Priest's. Now a whole day is often lost in going a long distance to baptize a sick child, when the local Deacon would, in most cases, be at hand to perform that office.

The Priest would, by this scheme, be relieved from a considerable portion of outward and ritual duties, and be enabled to engage more earnestly in the more purely spiritual work of the care of souls. I am quite sure, that sermons would not so often be the meagre, hungry things they are, if our Clergy had the helps which Christ and the Church designed they should have.

In fact, under this scheme, we might fairly expect to see the standard of preparation for Priest's Orders considerably elevated.

The second objection—that the people's reverence for the Ministry, would be diminished—I also deny. In cases, too many to be deemed exceptional, our people's reverence for the Clergyman is founded rather upon the fact of his being a "college-man," a "learned man," than upon his divine commission or spiritual character, and this is often all the difference which they can see between him and the Primitive Methodist preacher. But since this difference is certain, in the operation of natural causes, to diminish, on what ground shall be built up reverence for the Ministry?

Now in spite of the petition of the Litany which enumerates the three Orders (though scores of congregations never hear the Litany) multitudes of our people are ignorant of the existence of Three Orders, and still more profoundly ignorant of the nature, powers, and duties of those Orders. The Deacon and Presbyter are alike called "the minister," and no essential, if any distinction is known. An Archdeacon is supposed to be a distinct order; and several of the people in my own mission, at the last visitation of the Archdeacon, spoke of him as "the Deacon!" Why is this, but because the people know, if at all, the Deacon