

the Church should employ Scripture Readers and others of the laity and parochial ministrations without virtually, though informally, recognizing a lower class of ministers, and a lower class of duties, as necessary for the instruction of the people; nor is it surprising, that many of those who are so employed should desire, that their mission should have public authority, and be publicly committed to them. The fitness of their desire being admitted, and the services performed by these persons partaking more or less of those which are entrusted in our Ordinal to the Deacon, the course of proceeding, which naturally suggested itself, was that of giving to such persons the office and position of a Sub-deacon; and your Grace is aware that this was in effect the proposition, which the late Archbishop Sumner permitted me to submit to his consideration, and to make known to the Church as having been so submitted, as long ago as 1850.

There was little difficulty in tracing the outline of the duties of a Sub-diaconate in accordance with our own Ordinal, as set forth at the Reformation, and the expediency of establishing such an Order has been, as your Grace is aware, discussed by the Clergy in several places. I may be allowed also to add, that the formation of the Association to which I have alluded, as well as other circumstances, may be adduced to show, not only that persons are ready to undertake such an office if established, but also that something is expected to be done to meet the wants of the Church and the wishes of those who are willing to render her the assistance which she so much requires. It is one thing, however, to devise a measure, and another to put it in practice, and accordingly it is found, that in the endeavour to carry out the design, and to give a real and legal existence to such an Order of Ministers, we are met with many objections and with serious difficulties. Some persons have scruples respecting the addition of another Order to the three, which from the Apostles' time have been in Christ's Church. Others are doubtful about the title of Lay Deacons or of Sub-deacons. The title Lay Deacon is said to be in itself a contradiction in terms, whilst that of Sub-deacon is looked on with jealousy, as if its adoption would assimilate the ministry of our Church to that of Rome. But, after all, the most serious obstacle to the re-establishment of any Order appears to be the connexion of our Church with the State. The Church alone, without the authority of Parliament, seems not to have the power to make any addition to the number of her Orders, to alter the quality of those who are admitted to them, or to frame a form of Ordination for use in the Church. These objections have been so strongly pressed-upon me in high quarters, that I have been almost led to despair of the Order of Deacons ever being made an efficient Order, or the performance of its duties secured to the Church by means of some other Order to be newly appointed or restored.

I am thankful, however, that from the same quarter from which I received so full a statement of the difficulties with which the question is surrounded, a suggestion was made that if the hindrances to the direct admission of the laity to the Order of Deacons were carefully considered, the removal of them might be a comparatively easy task, and certainly less difficult than that of devising measures for the establishment of another Order of Ministers.

In compliance with the suggestion, I have now to state to your Grace that, assuming that the Church is prepared to accept as Deacons, persons of private incomes, those who have served in the army and navy, lawyers, physicians, &c., and thus to include in the Order other persons, besides those who are qualified for and desirous of the priesthood, but three obstacles appear to stand in the way. The first is that of the Statute Law, which prohibits all persons in Holy Orders