

chapter on Deacons from the treatise almost verbatim.

From this work the following extracts are taken: "From the divine institution of deacons we gather—1st. That the deacon is a distinct officer from the elder. It is a defect and fault in some congregations that they put no difference betwixt these two, but so confound and mingle them together, as if they were both one, either appointing none for the office of deacon, but leaving that charge also upon the elders, or else giving the deacons the same power and employment with the elders. It is true whatsoever the deacon may do by virtue of his office, that same may be done by an elder, as whatsoever is done by an elder may be done by a minister; because the higher and more eminent officers in the Church include the powers of the lower. It is also true that the deacons may assist in judgment with the ministers and elders, and be helping to them in those things that concern the oversight of the congregations by information and advice; yet it is necessary that congregations should so far regard the ordinances and reverence the wisdom of God in appointing these officers, as to have both elders and deacons, and to preserve them distinct in their actions and operations, not giving to the deacons or suffering them to assume the elder's office. 2nd. That deacons are not to count lightly of this employment, or any others to esteem lightly of them, because they are called thereunto and do exercise the same; but that they themselves and all others ought to look upon it as one of those holy and honourable employments which the wisdom of God hath thought fit to appoint in his house for supplying the necessities of the saints. The Lord Jesus himself did not disdain to wash his disciples' feet; angels are all of them ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for their sakes who are appointed to be heirs of salvation. Why, then, should any think it below them to serve the Church of Christ, and to minister to the saints in this employment."

"On the Calling of Deacons.—None is to step into this office but he that is lawfully called thereunto. Unto their calling it is needful—1st. That they have abilities and gifts fit for the charge, together with an honest purpose of heart to serve the Lord faithfully in the discharge of the same, by seeking his honour and the good of the Church. 2nd. That they be chosen by the congregation in which they are to serve, which choice is to be made after the same manner as that of a ruling elder.—3rd. That trial be taken by the minister and elders concerning their conversation, that it be blameless and holy; and concerning their gifts, that they have that tenderness, discretion, dexterity, and prudence, that is fit for that employment, and that they be admitted to their charge with prayer and supplication, and opening of the Word, concerning their duty, publicly in the congregation, where they are solemnly to engage themselves to be faithful to the charge committed to them of God."

From the Westminster Confession the following extract may suffice:

"Of the Officers of the Church.—The officers which Christ hath appointed for the edification of his Church, and the perfecting of the saints, are, some extraordinary, as apostles, evangelists, and prophets, which are ceased. Others ordinary and perpetual, as pastors, teachers, and other church-governors, and deacons."

Our last extract for the present will show the news which prevail in the Free Church of Scotland in regard to this office. The following overture was passed, as an interim act, by the last General Assembly, *nem. con.*, and is now in general operation throughout the Church. It is, however, only an interim act, and must receive the approval of a majority of the Presbyteries of the Church before it becomes a permanent law. There seems to be no doubt that it will soon be thus sanctioned. We observe that the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh, at a late meeting, resolved to report

their unanimous approval of it to the next General Assembly:

**OVERTURE** and Interim Act on the duties of Elders and Deacons, and on the Management of the Property and Secular Affairs of Congregations.

"Whereas it has become necessary, in consequence of the restoration of the scriptural order of deacons, and in consequence of the late change in the outward condition of the Church, to point out and regulate the duties of elders and deacons respectively, and to define and describe the powers and the meeting of congregational office-bearers for seasonal business, the General Assembly agree to transmit to Presbyteries the following rules and regulations, as an overture, for their opinion; and the Assembly further pass the said rules and regulations as an interim act—viz:

"1. Respecting the peculiar duties of elders:—

"1. That they sit in session along with the minister, and assist in the administration of discipline, and in the spiritual government of the church.

"2. That they take a careful oversight of the people's morals and religious principles, of the attendance upon public ordinances, and of the state of personal and family religion.

"3. That they visit the sick from time to time in their several districts.

"4. That they superintend the religious instruction of the young, and assist the minister in ascertaining the qualifications of applicants for admission to sealing ordinances.

"5. That they superintend and promote the formation of meetings within their districts for prayer reading of the Scriptures, and Christian fellowship, among the members of the church.

"II. Respecting the peculiar duties of deacons:

"1. That they give special regard to the whole secular affairs of the congregation.

"2. That they attend to the gathering of the people's contributions to the general fund for the sustentation of the ministry; and that they receive the donations which may be made for other ecclesiastical purposes.

"3. That they attend to the congregational poor.

"5. That they watch over the education of the children of the poor.

"III. Respecting the duties which are common to elders and deacons:

"1. That both elders and deacons may receive the Sabbath collections of the people, according to such arrangements as shall be made by the Deacons' Court.

"2. That, for the better discharge of their peculiar duties respectively, as well as with a view to increased opportunities of doing good, both elders and deacons visit periodically the districts assigned to them, and cultivate an acquaintance with the members of the church residing therein.

"3. That it is competent for elders to be employed as deacons, when a sufficient number of deacons cannot be had.

"4. That deacons may assist the elders with their advice, whether in session or otherwise, when requested so to do.

"IV. Respecting the meeting of minister, elders, and deacons, for secular affairs,—which meeting may be called the Deacons' Court.

"1. That the minister preside in said meeting, when he is present; and, in his absence, any elder or deacon whom the meeting may fix upon.

"2. That the said meeting or Deacons' Court, is convened by citation from the pulpit, or by personal notice to the members thereof, and is called by authority of the minister, or at the requisition of any three members,—said requisition being addressed to the minister, or, in time of a vacancy of the pastoral charge, to the clerk of the said Court; and the proceedings are opened and closed with prayer.

"3. That this court has the management and charge of the whole property belonging to the congregation, including church, session-house, manse, school buildings, &c., and of all its secular affairs,

—including, of course, the appropriation of seats with the determination of all questions relating thereto; and it is the province and duty of said Court to transmit from time to time, to the treasurer appointed by the General Assembly, or their Committee, the funds raised for the general sustentation of the ministry; also to apply the remaining congregational funds, in fitting proportions, to the support of the ministry, the payment of the salaries of the various subordinate functionaries, and the defraying of all necessary charges connected with the property, or with the dispensation of Christian ordinances; to apply, moreover, any surplus which may thereafter arise to religious, ecclesiastical, educational, or benevolent objects; likewise to make special collections at the church door, as often as may appear to them to be necessary, for the temporal relief of poor members of the congregation, and for the education of the children of the poor; and, finally to receive the deacons' reports of their proceedings, to give them such advice and instructions as may be required and to decide as to the payments to be made by them for the relief of the poor and the education of youth.

"4. That while the church is solely at the disposal of the minister for all religious purposes, the consent of the Deacons' Court, as well as of the minister, is necessary, before any meeting, not strictly of a religious, ecclesiastical, or charitable nature can be held in it.

"5. That the said Court shall have one or more treasurers and a clerk, and a separate record for the minutes of its proceedings.

"6. That the record of the Court, with the treasurer's account of receipt and expenditure, after said account shall have been duly audited by appointment of the Court, shall be annually exhibited to the Presbytery of the bounds, at the first ordinary meeting thereof after the 15th March, for the purpose of being examined and attested by the Presbytery at said meeting.

"7. That on the first Monday after said attestation of the record and treasurer's account, or on some convenient day of the first or second week following the attestation by the Presbytery, a congregational meeting shall be held, when the Deacons' Court shall present a report of its proceedings for the preceding year, give such information and explanations as may be asked for, and receive any suggestions which may be offered by the members of the congregation for the consideration of the Court, with reference to the future distribution of the funds. The congregational meeting shall be convened by intimation from the pulpit, and the minister, if present, shall preside in it.

"8. That to the said Court shall belong the appointment and dismissal of the church-officer and door-keepers."

## Home Missions.

### CORRESPONDENCE OF MISSIONARIES.

The following extract from a communication by the Rev. Alexander Steel will, we are sure, be read with much interest. It is dated at Toronto, 22nd November, 1844, and furnishes a view of Mr. Steel's labours from the period of their commencement in this country in July last:—

The town of Guelph lies about 30 miles to the north west of Hamilton; contains a population of between ten and twelve hundred. On a rising ground in the centre of the town stands the Presbyterian church. It is a respectable looking building, with a spire, and in ordinary good repair. It accommodates between 250 and 300 hearers, and might be made to contain 100 more by the erection of a gallery. This church became vacant a few months since by the resignation of the Rev. Mr. Smith, so that Guelph and its neighbourhood have been lately added to the formerly extensive field of missionary labour in Canada West. I visited this part of the colonial vineyard