

cribes the established Policie of the Church under its various heads and his own censure of the same ; thinking thereby as Melville says "to make us and our Discipline odious to the Breithring of the French Kirke and to the Quein and Kirke of England." In the *thirteenth* article the "Bischope" describes the functions of the Deacon in the presbyterian Church thus—"Ther belanges to the Patrimonie of the Kirke all sic temporal and spiritual lands, teinds, rents, as has bein at anie tyme foundit or dotted (bequeathed) thairunto ; and it is sacrilage to the Prince or anie inferior persons to middlo thairwith except the Deacones onlie to the use forsaid." Upon this he pronounces censure as follows : "Benefices and Patronages hes bein zealuslie and godlie appointed be our antecessours ; and Christian Pastors may with saiff conscience enjoy the saming. And the Deacones to be appointed ower the Kirke-rents is an preposterous imitation of the Primitive Kirke, without anie kynd of reasone."

Much more might be said on the historical aspect of this question, but enough has we deem been written to convince any reasonable mind, that the office and function of the Deacon is not an invention of modern times in the presbyterian Church.

From a survey of the constitutional Charters of our time-honored Church, which must be regarded even in these days as displaying singular political sagacity and Biblical learning, we are warranted in saying, that our Fathers did not consider the work of reformation as complete untill and unless to the Deacons the *whole ecclesiastical goods* were entrusted for administration, in concert with the rulers or Elders of the Church.

The principles of the Books of Discipline are those which the Free Church, in perfecting the work of reformation begun in 1560, has embodied in the statute which defines and prescribes the office and functions of the Deacons and their relation to the eldership. With such alterations as the circumstances of our Church seem to demand, it is proposed to *recommend* on the authority of the Church, that a similiar Constitution of Deacons Courts be adopted in this Country. The Synod has frequently recommended congregations to elect Deacons, but it has not yet given any instruction as to their functions and the manner in which these are to be discharged. Several congregations agreably to this, to the conscientious presbyterian, authoritative counsel have elected Deacons ; but no sooner has this been done than the difficulty of assigning to them their place in the Church has been felt. Hence great *diversities of administration* are to be found and some practices anomalous, and repugnant to the Presbyterian constitution. To prevent confusion and to remedy such defects, it is felt by many to be a duty from which the Synod, and the Church cannot in faithfulness shrink, to make some declaration on the question—to prescribe some form in which the Deacons whose appointment they have recommended, may without dispute discharge their Scriptural work.

If the Synod, and the Church through its Presbyteries will do this, it is obvious that it must be done in conformity with the statements and principles of the Word. A matter vital to the constitution of the church and intimately affecting its peace and good-order cannot without detriment be left in doubt. A declaration of the Church regarding it is we apprehend imperative. If it be thought that the Overture now under discussion is not in accordance with the teaching of Scripture and the presbyterian Constitution, then let it be so altered and amended as that it shall be brought into such conformity. By all means let us perfect our Church organization. Let there be no breach in the walls of our Zion, by which the enemy may enter in and destroy our purity and peace.

The Overture referred to is designed to define the relations of the Elders to the Deacons, the specific duties of each, and the work which they have in common to do.