

houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus".

It will easily be seen that, upon the authority of these passages, we are warranted in saying that Deacons ought to be

1st. Men of established moral character—"of honest report"—"blameless".—There are special temptations connected with the management of pecuniary affairs, and they to whom this is entrusted must have the confidence of those for whom they act. It is not enough that they be free from actual charge, they ought to be of tried and acknowledged integrity. There are persons of plausible manners, who can make smooth speeches merely to beguile the simple; but these men of "double tongue", who under pretence of zeal for the church might only avail themselves of their official standing to gratify their "greed of filthy lucre", or their love of pre-eminence, must be rejected. Being "given to much wine" is in itself an immorality, at the same time, also, it tends to impair all confidence even in the minds of men who might be little affected by the circumstance that it is immoral. Nor is personal character alone to be considered here. An individual may be in himself unobjectionable, and yet may be connected with a family of such a character as would render it altogether inexpedient that he should be placed in an office such as this. If his wife or his children are of irregular disreputable habits, that circumstance alone might expose the affairs of the church in his hands to mismanagement, and might make the character of the church a theme for the song of the drunkard.

2d. Men of intelligence and good business habits—"full of wisdom." In order that they may be qualified for conducting the details of the business entrusted to them, they require to be persons of a good sound judgment, possessed of some knowledge of human character, and practised in some degree in the management of worldly affairs. It is not meant that this should be the result of a very lengthened experience. That would imply advanced years; whereas they seem to have been generally young men who were appointed to this office, and who in the faithful discharge of its duties prepared themselves for a higher office—that "good degree" of which the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy. There ought, however, to be evidence of that

good sense, and readiness in the management of business that may warrant the expectation that justice will be done to the interests committed to them.

3rd. Sound in the faith—"holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." The admission of unsound doctrine into the church is fraught with danger. It is quite true, that private individuals may without inconsistency hold a standing within the pale of the church and partake of her ordinances, although they have not yet seen their way to an acceptance of all the doctrines which she is engaged to teach, and may hold some views which she condemns as erroneous. Notwithstanding this defect of light, and this amount of error, there may still be that profession of faith and that walk and conversation which may justify their being regarded, in the judgment of charity, as the followers of Christ; while at the same time the position which they thus occupy expresses their willingness to be instructed by the church, and to submit to her government and discipline. Something more than this, however, is necessary in the case of office-bearers; and accordingly, although Deacons are not appointed to preach the word, yet as parties who occupy an influential position in the church, and who are entrusted with the management of an important branch of her affairs, they ought to give evidence of their decided attachment to her principles. With us, this attachment is indicated by a subscription of the Confession of Faith, and a declaration of adherence to the system of church government and worship set forth in her other subordinate standards, as being founded on the word of God and agreeable thereto. There ought to be such an acquaintance with these principles, and such a conviction of their truth, as that the individual may give these assurances with a "pure conscience."

4th "Full of the Holy Ghost". It is not enough that there should be an adherence to these principles as being intellectually apprehended to be true.—They should have a lodgement in the heart, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The persons appointed to the discharge of these duties ought to be, in as far as men can judge, the subjects of vital religion. Without this there may be fitful movements—alacrity, perhaps, in the discharge of some duties, so long as there may be a popular feeling in their favour—while some personal distinction is to be obtained, or some selfish end to