

as possible." It is notorious that since the Churches in England have developed a richer order of service, with surpliced choirs, that the bleeding process, which came from a low state of the system, has been almost wholly stopped. When services generally were dull and surpliced choirs few, the secessions to Rome began and went on freely; when services were raised in dignity, in beauty, in appropriateness, when surpliced choirs became general secessions to Rome gradually lessened and ceased. It is now demonstrable, it is an admitted historic fact, that the order of divine service symbolised, as some think, by a surpliced choir, has proved in our days a more effectual barrier to Rome, than all the anti-Papal tracts or sermons ever sent out or preached.

That an order of divine service which edifies, delights, and richly blesses the souls of God's most spiritual saints, tends to create in them a belief in the claims of Rome, to be the only true Church, is irrational. To a sane mind there is no conceivable connection as cause and effect between these things. A connection is said to exist between certain party agitators for their selfish purposes, who thus show how contemptuously they regard the reasoning powers of their victims. The "poor Papist" who places his conscience in the keeping of a priest is not more pitiable than the "poor Protestant" who throws aside his God given freedom of thought to place his brains in the keeping of a party clique. That surpliced choir services are capable of being the cause of the acceptance of the claims of Rome, is not only contrary to experience, but is absolutely opposed to and irreconcilable with the laws operative over the mind.

THE NEED OF A WIDER USE OF THE DIACONATE AND OF LAY HELP IN THE CHURCH.

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This is a question which has often been discussed; but discussed it still must be till it comes to take a practical shape amongst us. This at the present day it certainly does not take. It may be said without fear of contradiction that very few of our people have any distinct idea of what a deacon is. They know what a bishop is, and they know what a clergyman is. The bishop stands out plainly and distinctly before the face of the whole Church as a superior officer. He is known by his very dress and distinctive robes. The powers vested in him by his office give him a superior position, which all loyal Churchmen, clerical or lay, are glad to recognize. The difference between a bishop and a clergyman who is not a bishop is a fact in itself plain to be seen.

But there is not that same distinction between a priest and a deacon. Indeed, it may be said, there is little if any distinction between them. A deacon, it is true, does not usually pronounce the absolution or the benediction, nor does he alone administer the Holy Communion. Yet this is not sufficient. He does not stand out before us all in that distinctive order which it was intended he should. He is simply with us a clergyman somewhat curtailed in powers till he can go through the second necessary step in ordination. It is this which seems to the eyes of many in the Church defect in practice which it would be well to have remedied as speedily as possible.

The more one studies the Prayer Book the more

one becomes convinced that the compilers of it were right, and the practices of the day when in conflict with it, are wrong. In the preface to the ordinal there occur these often quoted words:—

"It is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy scripture and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church, bishops, priests and deacons."

And in the 1st Rubric of "The Form and Manner of Making of Deacons," it is directed that at each ordination "There shall be a sermon or exhortation declaring the duty and office of such as come to be admitted deacons; how necessary that order is in the Church of Christ, and also how the people ought to esteem them in their office."

It would seem that the necessity of such an order (as a distinctive order) is not felt in the Church, and therefore those who preach sermons at the ordering of deacons must have a way, peculiar to many, of evading rubrics. But, by following closely the ordination service itself, the mind of the Church, as evident to those who compiled the service, is clearly seen. The portion of Scripture selected for the epistle contains the words, "They who use the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, (or as it is in the Revised Version 'gain to themselves a good standing') and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Instead of the epistle the passage from the 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostle, relating to the ordination of St. Stephen and others, may be read. And this passage is important as bearing upon the office of a deacon, for although the diaconate is not mentioned in connection with the seven men ordained, it has always been regarded as an instance of it, and that the compilers of our own Prayer Book so regarded it, is evident from the mere fact of their having inserted the passage as an alternative for the epistle in the ordination of deacons. These men were ordained for a subordinate purpose. They were to attend to the wants of the poor. The apostles came to the conclusion that their time should not be taken up in attending to matters of that kind. More urgent demands were made upon their time in connection with the "ministry of the words." Subordinate officers could attend to the temporal wants of the widows and the poor.

It is significant that immediately after the appointment of these subordinate officers, the sacred writer makes this record:—

"The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

It may well be believed that a judicious use of the diaconate proper, (i. e. a subordinate order of men under the guidance of the priesthood) would give a similar impetus to the work of the Church at the present day. But what many of us regard as an objectionable feature of the present day, is that this primitive idea of the diaconate has been almost lost with us. When a man is ordained a deacon with us, he at once looks for the position which ought by rights to belong to priests only. He at once looks for a sole charge. He must talk about "his parish"; he must be considered in every way a clergyman; he must have his own Church, and manage everything his own way. Nor is he to be blamed for this. No unkindness towards him is intended. Custom has taught him, unhappily, that a diaconate is a matter of form, which he must endure for a year with full permission, in the meantime, to proceed with his work exactly as if he was a priest. Occasionally he can exchange with some priest, in order that "his people" may receive the Holy Communion.

Now this is all contrary to the original idea of the deacon. To say nothing of primitive practice, it is contrary to the idea that the Prayer Book bids us hold regarding him, for, to quote again from our Ordination Service, the bishop is directed to address the candidates for the diaconate as follows:—

"It appertaineth to the office of a deacon in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the priest in Divine Service, and specially when he ministereth the Holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof, and to read Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church; and to instruct the youth in the catechism; in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants, and to preach, if he be admitted thereto

by the bishop. And furthermore, it is his office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the parish, to intimate their estates, names and places where they dwell, unto the curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the parishioners, or others."

It will be noticed that all these duties place the deacon in a position entirely subordinate to a superior officer over him, viz.: the "priest" or "curate," i. e. the rector or incumbent of the parish.

How very much the need of such an officer is felt! In the matter of assisting in the Holy Communion alone what a boon such an officer would be in a congregation where there is a large number of communicants! Instead of securing, often at a great expense, what is called a "curate" or assistant minister, it would be found all that it is necessary to have some good pious man belonging to the congregation ordained a deacon, that he might render the required assistance. In him there would be an officer resident in the parish, to baptize children, visit the sick and perform other necessary duties in the absence from home or illness of the incumbent.

Is there not too small a regard paid at the present day to the ability and qualifications of men who are put in sole charge of parishes? Take the question of preaching alone. It is enjoined in the Ordination Service that deacons shall preach only "if admitted thereto by the bishop." Would it not be well for our bishops to retain this wise power of discretion thus put in their hands, and require their deacons to preach one under their special permission? In this way the abilities peculiar to each man would be arrived at to the great advantage of the Church. All men are not adapted for preaching, and it is laying upon them a heavy responsibility, and almost an irksome duty, to be obliged incessantly to preach. Other men love preaching. They do it well. They are adapted for it by nature. Surely it is a mistake not to utilize the peculiar abilities that different men may have, so as to have work done in the ministry which is genial to all, and then it will be done well. As well might one expect every lawyer to be a successful pleader at the bar as to expect every clergyman to be effective in his preaching. Men have different gifts. So was it in apostolic days. "God gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers for the work of the ministry" (Ephes. iv, 11, 12), and it is unkind and unwise to expect any one man to perform all these offices in himself.

The priest in charge of a parish should be if possible an able preacher, but he should have under him his deacons to assist him in all other departments of Church work. What time this would save! What an economy of forces in the Church it would produce!

The advantage of this system would be very evident in town and city congregations. And in rural parishes especially those which we call missions, it would be much better surely to have one good able priest in charge of two or three of them grouped together, with several deacons under him to conduct ordinary services and attend to subordinate matters, leaving the priest in charge free to perform the higher duties of the Church. How many hard working missionaries, plodding along alone, performing all kinds of duties which really do not pertain to their own high office, have cried out, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." In most of our dioceses there are priests enough; but we should have a whole army of assistants in our deacons. These might be men who never intend to seek higher orders in the Church. As already wisely provided by the enactment of our Provincial Synod, such men are being admitted, though slowly, to work in the Church.

Some practical difficulties, however, in connection with this matter will soon have to be met. For instance, are these deacons ordained under the Canon of Provincial Synod,—these, as we may call them, "perpetual deacons,"—to be considered clergymen? If so will not their widows share the privileges of the Widows and Orphans Fund? No doubt this consideration deters bishops from ordaining as many such deacons as they otherwise would. In view of this matter the Diocesan Canons should be more carefully worded. The term "widows and orphans of the clergy" is too vague. The expression "Protestant clergymen" once cost the Church of England in this country the clergy reserves, and now that we are beginning to make some distinction between priests and deacons, we should carefully guard the wordings of our Canons. Instead of clergymen we should use the words bishops and priests (or presbyters), leaving the deacons out.

Nor would this be any great hardship. In the case of the perpetual deacons (as for the sake of distinction we may call them,) since they are supposed to be men engaged in secular pursuits, they would not expect to share the privileges of what we may call the regular clergy, and in the case of deacons who are preparing for the priesthood, the deprivation would be only for a short time and usually when they are young and unmarried men. It might be beneficial to give such some gentle hint of the sort to remain unmarried till