

without a pastor for one of its congregations—that of the Free Church, Cote Street. We believe the Colonial Committee are fully alive to the importance, not to this city merely, but the Province at large, of having a pastor of experience and commanding talent settled over this congregation. Their solicitude on the subject has been evinced by the efforts they have made to supply the congregation by a succession of deputies from Scotland, until a properly qualified ministry be found willing to accept so important a charge, and the members of that congregation can never feel sufficiently grateful for the exertion made by the Colonial Committee in their behalf. The field which the city itself presents, would demand for this congregation the services of a settled pastor, and an assistant missionary, and the claims of the country at large on a minister settled in Montreal would be so numerous and so urgent that, unless this measure of supply be granted, many opportunities of usefulness will be lost.

Montreal, 25th April, 1846.

ADDRESS ON THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF THE TEMPORALITIES OF THE CHURCH.

(Continued from last Number.)

Upon this subject (whether and how far the functions of the office of deacon extend beyond the distribution of alms), as upon others of no small interest to the church, we cannot expect information in such terms and shapes as will convince the prejudiced, and silence the captious. But the humble and docile enquirer will doubtless find such lights as may lead him into the mind of Christ, and satisfy his conscience. Venerating the wisdom as well as the authority of the scriptures, he will easily admit that they must contain sufficient information upon a subject of such practical importance as the order of the church. He will also allow that in proportion as the statements upon such a subject are verbally scanty, or rather concise, their spirit, and the principles which they involve, must be worthy of attention, and the positions expressed, and even the terms employed, rich in import. As he will not suppose, on the one hand, that any thing essential is overlooked, so, on the other, he will not suppose that any thing can be exaggerated, or exalted into a false importance.

If we admit such plain and reasonable principles as these, and pursue our inquiries under their influence, we shall, perhaps, find ourselves obliged to conclude that the office of the deaconship has other objects than the necessities of the poor.

This may, in some measure, appear from the following considerations.

Apart from the peculiarly difficult circumstances in the church of Jerusalem which gave rise to the ordination of the seven deacons, before referred to, and which rendered their ministrations greatly difficult,—the deaconship, in scripture, as formerly observed, considered as a situation of high consequence, and demanding in those who would use it well eminent qualifications. Now, it must at once strike an impartial enquirer that the degree of consequence ascribed to the office, and the qualifications required for it, seem greatly disproportioned to any dignity or difficulty necessarily involved in the mere distribution of alms: and he will feel this apparent incongruity not easily reconcilable to the discriminating wisdom and characteristic simplicity of the word of God.

But there are circumstances which greatly increase this difficulty. For, allowing to the care of the poor all reasonable importance, an importance at least equal, cannot surely be denied to all the other externals of the church, viz: the provision to be made for the Lord's Table, for all the accommodations of worship, for the support of ministers and for liberalities of distant application. To provide for all those objects is the duty of every church, or congregation, according to its ability. It is unnecessary to prove, what it would be absurd to deny, that all those objects taken together, and some of them even singly are equal, nay superior, in importance to the care of the poor. That the care of the poor involves fewer difficulties than many of those other concerns is ascertained by all experience. It must therefore appear unaccountable, and incredible that the Head of the church should appoint an ecclesiastical office for the lesser and inferior concerns, and none for the more

important and difficult; and that so much should be said in the scripture respecting the qualifications of the distributors of alms, whose business in all ordinary cases requires few endowments beyond ordinary integrity, while nothing is said of the qualifications of those who are to manage all the other temporalities. These difficulties can be avoided only by the admission of the simple truth, which they indeed suggest to the unprejudiced mind, that since in the church there is an office appropriated to the temporalities, the whole of the temporalities are within its sphere. Admit this, and you will find enough to justify all that the scripture says of the importance, and difficulty, and honourableness of the deaconship, and of the necessity of great religious qualifications in those who are intrusted with it,—enough to justify the memorable expressions of the apostle Paul (1 Tim. iii.) concerning deacons,—that they must be persons holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, that they must be first proved, that they must be skilful in managing their own households, and that they who use the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith. For if all the temporalities belong to the superintendence of the deacons, the office will be rendered difficult, not only by the multiplicity and importance of the temporalities themselves, but much more by the nature of their official connexion with the members of the church, inasmuch as they will be placed and occupied precisely and extensively in that trying department of ecclesiastical things where the personal and private interests of the members of the church most interfere with their exertions for the public good, and where there is the strongest collision between the claims of God and man.

If any one will say that the concerns of the poor, altho' more easily managed, are alone committed to ecclesiastical office-bearers, because in their own nature they are more strictly ecclesiastical,—we deny the principle assumed, and although it were granted, we deny the conclusion meant to be deduced. Granting the principle assumed, viz: that the concerns of the poor are more strictly ecclesiastical, it is by no means a legitimate conclusion that other temporalities, because inferior in the supposed scale of gradation, may be expected to be overlooked by Christ in his arrangements for the government of the church. But we deny the principle that the concerns of the poor are of all the temporalities most eminently and intimately the objects of the church's care. Are the poor more closely connected with the church, or with the Head of the church, than its pastors are? Is it demonstrable, or imaginable, that there is any thing more sacred in the support of the former than of the latter? Is the support of the former more interesting to the church, or more important to it? On the contrary we contend that highly important as the supply of the poor is, some of the other external ecclesiastical concerns more intimately affect the existence of the church, and must therefore be the prior objects of ecclesiastical attention. The concerns of the poor are but secondary, and indeed in a certain view accidental: some of the other concerns are primary, perpetual, and indispensable to the existence of the church, and the dispensation of its ordinances. We can easily conceive that the support of the poor might have been wholly committed to the private charity of the members of the community at large, which we know was the case under the old testament dispensation: but we cannot so easily conceive that the support of the pastors should not be among the direct objects of the care of the government of the church,—because, according to the principle mentioned towards the beginning of this address, the first care of every government must be the preservation of the existence of the society for the good of which it is established. Now upon the support of the pastors depends the existence of the church and the dispensation of its ordinances; for without being maintained by the church they cannot, in ordinary circumstances, comply with the great and necessary prescription of entire dedication of themselves to the duties of their office.

If they who are disposed to restrict the sphere of the deaconship to the supply of the poor, will search the scriptures, they will find it impossible to authenticate this limitation. There is, in fact, no such limitation in the scriptures. The scriptures make no distinction at all among the temporalities of the church. If they do, where, and

in what terms is it expressed? If they do not, it is a distinction entirely arbitrary, futile, and inadmissible.

The daily ministration mentioned in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles seems to have been a systematic management, in constant operation, of whatever was not included in the devotional services of the church. For the whole of ecclesiastical affairs are there comprehended under two general heads, of which the one is called *the business of the daily ministration*, the other, *the ministry of the word and prayer*. As this division seems intended to be complete, the high probability is, that all the temporalities belonged to the former department. But without dwelling on probabilities (which, however, are not to be disregarded), it is sufficient for our arrangement to state the incontrovertible fact, that among church temporalities the scripture makes no distinction whatsoever: and that every thing in the nature of the subject, and in the principles of the scripture, requires, while nothing in the language of scripture forbids the conclusion, that all these temporalities are included in one common management belonging authoritatively to ecclesiastical office-bearers only.

We may further ask,—Is there any thing in the scripture respecting a government in the church distinct from that by ecclesiastical office-bearers? If there is not, by whose authority is such a government superseded?—Certainly, not by Christ. It is then among those things which are none of his. It is introduced unnecessarily, unless his institutions need our supplementary skill. And it is not only unnecessary but sinful, if it at all superseded any of his appointments. Now, this is a matter of very serious consideration. We must take care that in the affairs of the house of God they act not without a Divine warrant, and go not beyond their sphere. Let those unofficial persons who claim a right of management in the church, produce their warrant from Christ. If they cannot, it were better for them to resign their functions to those who can.

If it be asked, why does not the scripture explicitly indicate that all the temporalities mentioned above are the objects of the deaconship? Why is there no specification of all those concerns about which this office may be occupied? It may be said in reply, that this was not necessary. For since the deaconship is expressly provided for temporalities, and since the scripture makes no distinction whatever among temporalities, they must all belong to the office provided for such objects, and no conceivable advantage could have resulted from mentioning them in detail, had a complete enumeration of them been practicable. There is no such formal enumeration of the objects of the office of the ruling elder, nor of that of the pastor.

In concluding this deduction from the scripture, it may not be improper to observe, that although we hesitate not to affirm that a church in which a regular deaconship exists is the most complete in its constitution, yet as deacons are but *helps to governments*, or, as their office is included in that of the ruling elder, we shall not assert that the want of deacons render the organization of a church essentially defective. Unquestionably, however, a solicitude to render the ecclesiastical arrangements of every congregation as nearly as possible commensurate to the scriptural model, is most respectful to Christ, and will be found most advantageous to the community itself. Besides, if the deaconship may be suppressed because its functions are included in those of the office of the ruling elder, it may be difficult, after admitting such a principle, to show why the latter should not be discarded also, since its functions are confessedly included in those of the pastor.

The sum of what we have now endeavored to establish from the scriptures is this, that by the principles and provisions of the divinely instituted government of the church, the authoritative management of all its temporalities belong exclusively to its own office-bearers, and most appropriately to its deacons.

[To be concluded in our next.]

HANOVER.—The Hanoverian government have openly recognised the German Catholics, as a Christian sect, and permitted the organization of the church of Hildesheim, consisting of about sixty members.