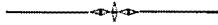


death, through a spiritual partaking of His Body and Blood, as given and shed for our redemption.

The death of Christ is the only deliverance by which the soul can pass from the condemnation and death which belong to the leprosy disease and awful guilt and outcasting of human nature, into that spiritual life of loving communion and fellowship with God in Christ's risen manhood which belongs to the health and truth of human nature.

And, sorry as I am to differ from Canon Gore and Professor Moberly, I would fain hope and believe that in *this*, at least, we may be in substantial agreement.

N. DIMOCK.



ART. II.—THE EXTENSION OF THE DIACONATE: A CLERICAL VIEW.

IT is an obvious piece of human wisdom that each man should make the best use possible of the materials he has to his hand, and should not waste time in sighing for things which are beyond his reach. The farmer must do the best he can with the land he has; the statesman must put to service the abilities which exist in the men of his country; and the same thing is true of the Church in its efforts to deal with the tasks which it has in hand. The more these tasks increase in quantity, and in the anxiety they cause, the more need there is to keep well in sight all the material which exists for dealing with the tasks, and putting it to the utmost use.

1. The increase of the Church's task is readily represented by the fact that for some time past the population of England and Wales has been growing at about 300,000 a year. This, otherwise stated, is a growth day by day of nearly 1,000; or, stated once again with more accuracy, a growth of about 6,000 per week on an average. The Church's tasks in the face of this increase may be compared with the responsibilities resting upon the parents and elder children in any family. If in any family the standard of uprightness and religion is to be maintained, and the family is to avoid losing its character for right thought and action, it can only be by the elder ones being able to exert a sufficient influence over the younger ones as they are added to the family, to result in naughty tempers and inclinations of these young ones being checked, and desires being developed in favour of what is right, and against what is wrong. If this be not done, the good character of the family must be a declining quantity. The case with

the nation is similar. Here is a very much larger family—its numbers are increased by 6,000 each week. Unless the influence exercised for what is good and right be sufficiently strong to affect the numbers who are added to this great family year by year, the character of the family for uprightness and religion must decline.

Here, then, is the great task of the Christian Church in England and Wales at this moment. It is plain that everything which tends towards the education of the mind, the building up of character, and the development of spiritual power in human souls, needs to be strengthened. A prominent place in this is obviously taken by the settled ministry of the National Church. This, in view of the Church's task, must necessarily be maintained and extended—extended, I say, and not merely maintained—for not only is the total population of the country vastly increased year by year, involving, we might estimate, a complete equipment of fifty new parishes every year on an average, unless arrears are to be left by us for those to overtake who come after us; but also there is the fact that the added population is found almost entirely in and around our cities and great towns. The thousands of small villages which have had, and perhaps to a large extent must continue to have, one clergyman each, do not grow in their total populations; each year young men and young women leave them in numbers quite equal to those of the babies that are born there. The result is that the many thousands of clergymen who have charge of such places cannot help the Church at all *directly* in ministering to the added millions, and the task of providing for these added millions may be realized when we remind ourselves of a few of the more striking instances of the growth of population.

Middlesbrough, for instance, has grown in 100 years from nothing to its present size; in the last twenty years, from 50,000 to 100,000. Barrow-in-Furness has grown in fifty years from practically nothing to over 50,000. The South Wales Colliery Valleys have been increasing during the last twenty years by about 20,000 people a year. London, over the border, we are told by the Bishop of St. Albans, is growing at the rate of over 40,000 people a year; and the present Bishop of Winchester, when taking farewell of his South London clergy, said that the growth of South London was about 35,000 people a year, and that unless the Church could equip in that part one new parish with its permanent Church, and income for vicar and curate, once in every *ten* weeks, it was only adding to arrears which had to be overtaken.

2. Now, what are the facts with regard to the ministry? So far from being able to record an important addition to its

numbers, we have to lament the fact that the number added to the ministry in recent years has been smaller than the numbers admitted some ten years ago. To be precise on this important point, we may state that in the years 1887-88-89 the total number admitted to the diaconate was 2,287; in the years 1897-98-99 it was only 1,951, showing a decline on the three years of 336.

The question at once arises what the Church should do in view of these facts. She must plainly not sit down and waste time in idle weeping. She must certainly not ruin herself by an exhibition of the stern conservatism which would make her neglect new and important tasks rather than modify the methods of older ones. She must see whether some plan cannot be devised for spreading over a larger area those men she has in her ministry who have already been admitted to full Orders, and at the same time see whether she cannot provide in some way for minor ministerial duties in populous places, which are at the present time being done by an unnecessary accumulation there of persons in full Orders. By minor ministerial duties, I mean such duties as the reading of Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany, and the Lessons, on Sundays as well as on weekdays; the reading of the Gospel, and the ministering of the chalice at the time of Holy Communion. Obviously much will depend on the arrangements which can be made for this. This leads me at once to the main suggestion I have to make.

3. It is my unhesitating opinion, as the result of a varied experience during twenty-five years, that the Church needs a diaconate of a more real kind than she has at the present time. By the plan now in vogue, we only use the diaconate as a kind of probationership for the priesthood. Most English people, if asked to say something about the diaconate, would be unable to describe the duties actually done in each important parish by the deacons of that parish. They would simply be able to say that a deacon was a young clergyman who was hoping some day to be a priest, but who for the present was unable to take certain parts of the service. We not only make our deacons mere probationer priests, but we require them to dress in priest's clothes; we call them "Reverend," as we do in the case of priests; and we require the separation from secular occupation to come at the time of admission to the diaconate, whereas it might very well be delayed until the admission to the priesthood, when it would come with a great degree of suitability, having regard to the special features of the Service of Ordination to the Priesthood, and also with much practical benefit to the Church in the extension of the ministry, as I now hope to show.

4. It is a fact, which I hope is known to many, and will be disputed by few, that in every large town there are a considerable number of Churchmen engaged in secular business, whose religious convictions and whose devotion to the work of the Church are such as to make them quite worthy of being compared as Christians and Churchmen with those who are in the ministry. Many of them are men whose education has been very nearly equal, perhaps better than some of those who are admitted to the ministry. They are quite qualified by education for reading in public, in church, without offence to educated people, the various parts of Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany, etc.; and the standard of their Christian living would make it quite certain that, if admitted to it, their private lives would not render their public ministry an offence to any of the congregation. Many of these men are already devoting the whole of their Sundays and much of their leisure hours during the week to helping Church work; they are doing so without one penny of remuneration, and are thereby showing that they have the cause of the Church at heart. Many of them would feel it to be a very high honour indeed for the Church to offer them admission to the diaconate, an order of Christian ministry which is not only ancient, but goes back even to Bible times. If admitted to the diaconate, they might be expected not to do less for the Church than they are doing now, and this would mean the giving of a large amount of ministerial service without remuneration at all.

5. The results of a step of this kind would be felt in various ways:

(1) Many parishes which now have three priests on the clerical staff could manage with two priests and one, two, or three of these deacons, appointed in the way I have suggested.

(2) As a result, the priest at present serving as the third of such a staff would be released for the charge of some newly-created conventional district.

(3) Parochial and central Church finances would benefit. The parochial Clergy Fund would be relieved of the duty of providing a third stipend of, let us say, £140. It would, as a result, be able to give an augmentation of the stipend of the second priest it retained; it would save itself the task of raising some money it at present has to collect towards completing the third stipend; and it could release the Church Pastoral Aid Society or the Additional Curates Society from the grant for the third priest at present being given, and enable the granting society to apply this money for the development of new work elsewhere.

(4) The Easter Day Communion difficulty would to a large extent disappear. The parish which has two Communions on Easter Day could have them taken by the parish priest, who, with some two or three deacons, could manage the administration to a large number of communicants.

(5) The existence of a large body of intelligent and vigorous deacons would necessarily tend very quickly to raise the standard of general capability in the superior officers—I mean those admitted to the priesthood.

(6) A very important link would be supplied between the ministry of the Church and those men who are connected with commercial life, to the very great advantage of both Christianity and commerce. The gap which at present appears to exist between commercial men and the clergy would necessarily become much lessened.

(7) The plan would be the means of leading many young men to desire a more intimate connection with the Church's ministry, and to be willing to leave commercial life and prepare for the priesthood. This result would work itself out in two ways. First, some of those admitted to this diaconate, if still young men in years, might desire to save up their money for a college course, and then, after obtaining a University degree, ask the Bishop to exchange their deacon's orders for the priesthood. Secondly, the sons of middle-aged men who had continued for many years to serve the Church as deacons might very reasonably feel a desire not merely to minister as deacons as their fathers have done, but to go on to desire the priesthood.

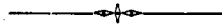
At any rate, it is difficult for the Church to deny that a large amount of good material exists at this moment near to its hand which is not being utilized in the most sensible and effective way. It is quite certain that the Church, by making more effective use of the most earnest-minded and energetic of her sons now in secular business, must, by using enthusiasm, increase its quantity and its power to the immense gain of the Church's health and life and work.

6. The merits of this proposition appear to be these. Firstly, that no modern order of workers is contemplated—it is simply the old diaconate, with the duties of the diaconate as they have always been understood; and, secondly, the only step that is necessary is the recall of the statute (I believe I am correct in describing it as 1 and 2 Vic., c. 106, §§ 29, 30) by which those who are admitted to the diaconate are required

to surrender secular occupation, and this need involve no religious difficulty, unless we take up the absurd mental position that there is something inherently bad in trade and commerce.

It is as well that I should add, in order to avoid misunderstanding, that, according to my idea, the business man, if admitted to the diaconate, should not *ipso facto* have authority to preach. This privilege should only be his if he "be thereto licensed by the Bishop himself"; and he would not have any claim to be advanced to the priesthood unless he could show himself well qualified for the higher office, and be ready to withdraw himself entirely from secular work.

PAUL PETIT.



ART. III.—THE EXTENSION OF THE DIACONATE: A "READER'S" VIEW.

IT has been often said that if you define your terms you prove your position, and the very difficulty which I experience in defining the ecclesiastical oxymoron before me affords some indication of the precarious nature of the position which I am to defend or attack, for an ill-defined or nebulous proposition is almost as embarrassing to its opponents as it is to its supporters: Is the lay-diaconate an order or an office? The subject seems to be conclusive in the former direction, the epithet in the latter; but as the greater includes the less, I propose to treat it as a qualified order rather than as an extended office. It appears to me to be easier to defend from an ecclesiastical standpoint the permission to deacons of secular employments, rather than the investiture of laymen with diaconal functions. But, on the other hand, I am bound to say that, should the lay-diaconate ever be established, the average man will be apt to consider its members rather as traders who minister than as ministers who trade, and to regard that interesting hybrid, the lay-deacon, as having superadded the sacred to the secular, rather than the secular to the sacred.

And this, believe me, is no mere dialectical distinction; it goes to the very root of the matter. Πάντα ῥεῖ—there is no absolutely perfect balance either in physics, or in economics, or in morals. No man ever yet exactly and at all times reconciled conflicting duties or even competing aspirations. Your lay-deacon will always be either a good man of business and an indifferent minister, or an excellent minister and only a moderately efficient professional person.