is that mystery, the great object of all  
faith: see note on ver.16. That expression makes it probable that the faith is here to be taken subjectively: *the*, or  
*their, faith* : the apprehension which appropriates to them the contents of God’s revelation of Christ. That revelation of  
the Person of Christ, their faith’s **mystery,**  
they are to hold) **in pure conscience** (see  
ch. i.19. From those passages it appears,  
that we must not give the words a special  
application to their official life as deacons,  
but understand them of earnestness and  
singleness of Christian character: being in  
heart persuaded of the truth of that divine  
mystery which they profess to have apprehended by faith).

**10.**] **And moreover** (the *moreover* introduces a caution—the  
slight contrast of a necessary addition to  
their mere present character) let these  
(who answer, in their candidateship for the  
diaconate, to the above character) **be put  
to the proof first** (viz. with regard to their  
blamelessness of life, see the conditioning  
clause below: e.g. by testimonials, and  
publication of their intention to offer themselves: but no formal way is specified, only  
the reality insisted on); **then let them  
act as deacons** (or, simply, *let them* *minister*: but more probably here in the narrower technical sense), **if they are** (found  
by the *testing process* to be) **irreproachable.**

**11.**] (**The**) **women in like manner**  
(who are these? Are they (1) women who  
were to serve as deacons,—deaconesses?— or (2) wives of the deacons?— or (3) wives of the deacons and overseers ?—or (4) women  
in general? I conceive we may dismiss (4)  
at once, for Chrysostom’s reason: “ Why  
should he in the midst of writing on  
another subject insert any thing respecting *women* ?”—(3) upheld by Calvin and others, may for the same reason, seeing that  
he returns to the deacons again in ver. 12,  
be characterized as extremely improbable :  
—(2) has found many supporters among  
modern Commentators: and it is the rendering of the A. V. But it has against it(*a*) the omission in the original of all expressed reference to the deacons: (*b*) the expression **in like manner**, by which the  
*deacons* themselves were introduced in  
ver. 8, and which seems to mark a new  
ecclesiastical class: (*c*) the introduction of  
the injunction respecting the deacons in  
ver. 12, as a new particular, which would  
hardly be if their wives had been mentioned before: (*d*) the circumstance connected with the mention of Phœbe as  
*deaconess* of the Church at Cenchreæ in  
Rom. xvi. 1, that unless these are deacon-  
esses, there would be among these injunctions no mention of an important class of persons employed as officers of the church.  
We come thus to consider (1), that these  
women are *deaconesses,— ministræ,* as  
Pliny calls them in his letter to Trajan  
[see note on Rom. xvi. 1]. In this view  
the ancients are as far as I know unanimous: and it is held by some of the ablest among the moderns. It is alleged against  
it—(a) that thus the return to the *deacons,*  
verse 12, would be harsh, or, as Conybeare  
says, “on that view the verse is most.  
unnaturally interpolated in the midst of  
the discussion concerning the deacons.”  
But the ready answer to this is found in  
Chrysostom’s view of ver. 12, that under  
the word deacons, and their household  
duties, he comprehends in fact both sexes  
under one: (b) that the existence of dea-  
conesses as an order in the ministry is after  
all not so clear. To this it might be answered, that even were they nowhere else mentioned, the present passage stands on  
its own grounds; and if it seemed from  
the context that such persons were indicated here, we should reason from this to the fact of their existence, not from the  
absence of other mention to their non-indication here. I decide then for (1): that these women are *deaconesses*) (**must be**)  
**grave, not slanderers** (corresponds to “*not doubletongued*” in the males, *slander* being the vice to which the female sex is more  
addicted. The word used for *slanderer* in this sense is peculiar, in the New  
Test., to these Epistles), sober (see on  
ver. 2, corresponding to *not given to much  
wine*, ver. 8), **faithful in all things** (cor-