

Dr. Campbell has, we think, done good service to the church by publishing this Tractate. It is written with decided ability and scholarship. We cordially commend it to the attention of the eldership of our church.

Towards the conclusion our author says :—

It may be asked *Quorsum hæc?* Is it the object—may it not at all events be the tendency—of this discussion to weaken the position and influence of the lay element in the church? We reply, first, that the ascertainment and maintenance of the truth in all things, especially in matters relating to religion and the church, is our plain duty, irrespective of consequences; and secondly, that even at the risk of consequences apprehended the cause of the Reformed polity on its great principles, imperatively demands that it be disembarassed of a theory which is repudiated by its most learned friends as unjustified by scripture and antiquity, which lays it open to the charge of straining the word of God—and which by involving it in confusion, self-contradiction and absurdity shakes its very foundations.

But, in reality, so far from either contemplating or apprehending any results prejudicial to the lay element, our very object is to promote its efficiency where it exists, and its extension where it does not; and these ends, we are persuaded, may be most efficiently secured by placing it in its true light and on its proper basis. Both, it is to be feared, have been greatly impeded by the theory in question. We have no doubt that the presbyter theory of the lay assessorship, apart from the injury done by it in other respects, to the cause of the Reformed polity, has hampered and paralysed the very institution, which it might be supposed to strengthen. Those men who by character and intelligence are best fitted to serve the church in that office, are those also most conscientiously desirous to to have clear and definite views of their position and duties. Such persons, referring to Scripture for instruction, are inevitably directed, by the popular theory of their office, to the passages in which a definite account of the qualification of *presbyters* is given. They are perplexed by seeing no instructions in those passages for such a special class as the eldership. There are many who feel that they occupied an intelligible and honourable position; if, as laymen, the recognised chiefs and representatives of their brethren, they were permitted to lay on the altar such gifts as they possess—who would gladly bring, both to the local administration, and to the more general councils of the church, the precious contributions of sound judgment, wholesome influence, practical knowledge of men and things, and earnest, honest, gratuitous zeal; but who when they are desired to assume the guise and obligations of presbyters or bishops of a mutilated and inferior order, for whose guidance Scripture gives no instructions, and which popular opinion subjects in an indefinite degree to the responsibilities and duties of the presbyterate, are confused and hesitate. The consequence is, that the community loses the important services they are able and willing to render, by imposing on them a character and functions which they do not feel warranted to assume. pp. 62-65.

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*Heaven Opened.* A selection from the correspondence of Mrs Mary Winslow. Edited by her son Octavius Winslow, D.D. New York: R. Carter & Bros. Hamilton: D. McLellan.

Mrs. Winslow, a selection of whose correspondence is here presented to us, was a christian of great elocution of character, of enlarged acquaintance with the word of God, and of deep and ardent devotedness. The letters contained in this volume are well fitted to instruct, edify and comfort those who read them. The volume, we should say, is very beautifully got up.

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Other Notices in our next number.