

This will probably surprise some presbyterians, who have never looked into the history of the doctrines and practices of the church; yet it is a position that can be made to appear good by proofs and arguments both plausible and strong.

For one thing, it is manifest that the New Testament requires of all ordained Presbyters, that they should be "apt to teach," and should "feed the flock" of God. It also describes them under the titles of "bishops," "pastors," and "teachers." Such were the elders that were ordained in "every church," by Paul and Barnabas, and in "every city" of Crete by Titus. According to this view of the office, the text in 1 Tim. v. 17 should be understood as saying, "that the presbyters, pastors, bishops, or teachers who rule well, are worthy of double honour, especially those who labour much in the work of preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ."

Dr. Campbell shows that this was the sense in which the text was understood by English Presbyterians before the time of the Westminster Assembly, by the learned Blondel and Vitring, a by the Westminster Assembly itself, and accepted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland when it ratified the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647. That since that it has been held by almost all foreign divines of eminence, by such historians as Neander, Gieseler, Schaeff and Pressense; and at home it is supported by the honored names of Jamieson, Wodrow, Campbell and Hill.

What we know of the practice of the past Apostolic Church seems to confirm the idea that all *ordained* presbyters were pastors or bishops. The quotations given by Dr. Campbell from writers of the third and fourth centuries are very clear and conclusive, showing that while there was then a class of assessors in church judicatories, similar to those of the Reformed Churches, yet that these assessors were not ordained presbyters, or elders, in the true sense of the word, as used in the Epistles of Paul. The ancient practice too, of the Waldensian the Bohemian, and the Malabar Churches is conformable to this theory. Their elders were not New Testament presbyters, but only seniors or lay re-presentatives of the people.

Dr. Campbell does not, however, wish to rob the church of its eldership; he would rather give this important office its proper theoretic and practical position in the church. For the admission of the laity to the deliberation and legislative assemblies of the church, he finds a precedent in the council at Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 15, when "brethren" are expressly conjoined with the Apostles and the elders, also in the six brethren who accompanied Peter from Joppa to Cesarea, and in such expressions as the "chief men among the brethren."

One advantage of this theory is that it takes away what has always been a weak point in our defences, and that it brings us nearer to the Congregationalists on the one hand, and to the Episcopalians on the other. It also renders the theory of the office of the eldership conformable to our practice. The great difficulty which many churches feel in their efforts to obtain suitable elders, is to get men who possess the qualifications which our present theory of the office demands. Many of our best and wisest laymen too, who might be of great use in the councils of our church shrink from the office under a sense of the lack of those qualifications which our present theoretic standard demands. The ancient theory, which Dr. Campbell so judiciously states and advocates, would most likely secure to us the best lay-representatives of the christian people in the courts of the church, and make our present practice appear conformable to good conscience and the word of God.