

and that again will depend on the amount of our intelligence on this subject. To those who know and believe that Rome is carrying on a regular invasion of this country as head-quarters of the Protestantism of the world, with the view of subverting our religion and liberties, and that all that was so dearly won at the Reformation is at stake, the most multiplied and energetic measures of resistance will not seem extravagant; to those who are blind, on the other hand, to the spiritual dreamer or traitor, any measures of defence at all will seem quite unnecessary. It is cheering, however, to discover that the Protestant Church is arousing herself at length to some just sense of the emergency. The many kind and earnest letters which I have lately received, in striking contrast to those I received some years ago, are a proof of this. Still, very much remains to be done to regain our lost ground.

WERE PRELATIC BISHOPS THE HIGHEST PERMANENT OFFICERS IN THE EARLY CHURCH?

A very strong presumptive proof that elders, and not prelatie bishops, were the highest permanent officers, by Divine appointment, in the Church, may be derived from the facts that ecclesiastical power was vested in the elders, and that no higher permanent officer than the elder is anywhere in Scripture indicated or recognised. That ecclesiastical power or authority was vested in the elders appears from Paul's alluding, in 1st Timothy, v. 19, to "the ELDERS that rule well," and also from the fact that they who sat and voted in the Council at Jerusalem are stated again and again, in Acts, xv., to have been "the apostles and ELDERS."

In support of, or in opposition to, the position that no higher permanent officer than the elder is anywhere in Scripture indicated or recognised, those passages of Scripture only admit of being adduced which indicate the particular class of officer referred to in them. Passages which speak of "them that have the rule over you," and similar texts, are too indeterminate to be used on either side in this argument. We shall therefore consider in succession only those passages which are so explicit with regard to the ecclesiastical officer intended in them, as to entitle them to be cited with a view to determine who are the highest permanent ecclesiastical officers instituted by Divine appointment. It will not be difficult to prove that they are the elders.

Thus, ecclesiastical officers to whom, during the dearth in the reign of Claudius Caesar, the disciples sent their contributions in behalf of the brethren who dwelt in Judea, were "THE ELDERS" (Acts, xi. 30). The officers whom Paul and Barnabas ordained over the Churches which they had planted at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, are termed "ELDERS." "And when they had ordained them ELDERS in every Church" (Acts, xiv. 23). At the time of the Council of Jerusalem the chief ecclesiastical officers next in rank to the apostles in that city were "ELDERS." "They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and ELDERS about this question" (Acts, xv. 2). The persons next in rank to the apostles who sat and voted in that Council are again and again termed "elders." "And the apostles and ELDERS came together to consider of this matter" (Acts, xv. 6). "Then pleased it the apostles and ELDERS" (xv. 22)—"And as they went through the citier, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and ELDERS" (xvi. 4).

This last passage places the elders in the very next, if not in the very same, rank with the apostles, so far as the settled government of the Church is concerned; for it states that "the decrees" "were ordained of the apostles and ELDERS". Indeed, the apostles seem to have acted in this Council only in their capacity of elders, having exercised as members of it only the authority belonging to the office of elder. It is very remarkable that, in the enumeration of those who sat in it, there is no mention of bishops under that denomination. The members of it are invariably termed "the apostles and elders," and never