

tion on this question that they state in their own doric way. "Thir offices ar ordinar and aucht to continue perpetually in the Kirk, as necessar for the Government and policie of the same, and no more offices aucht to be re-ccivit or sufferit in the trew Kirk of God, establishit according to his word."

The "Second Book of Discipline" is even more explicit on the subject. This was commonly called the "Book of the Policie," and may be regarded as the constitution of the Presbyterian Church. Its preparation occupied the several judicatories and commissions of the Church for ten years. Every part of it was thoroughly weighed and considered by men whose learning is indisputable and whose faithfulness in the interpretation of Scripture is without parallel in the Church. The *eighth* chapter of this Book treats "of the Deacons and their office, the last ordinar function in the Kirkis," and which together with the *ninth* concerning the "Patrimonic of the Kirk and the distribution thereof," is a full and admirable statement of the principles of the Word on the question, and with which the principles contained in the Overture now before our Church, on the constitution of Deacons Courts are identical. Not to quote all that these chapters contain, we shall give only a few of the more prominent sentences. After stating that the word *Diaconos* is now taken "only for them unto whom the collection and distribution of the almes of the faithful and ecclesiasticall gudes does belang;" it goes on to say that, "The office of the Deacons, sa taken, is an ordinar and perpetuall ecclesiasticall function in the Kirk of Christ. The Deacon aucht to be callit and electit as the rest of the spirituall officers. Their office and power is to receive and distribute the *haill ecclesiasticall gudes*. This they aucht to do according to the judgement and appoyntment of the Presbyteries or elderships." Again it says, "The gudes ecclesiasticall aucht only to be collectit and distributit by the Deacons as the word of God ap-poynts." Such is declared to have been the Deacons work in the "Apostolical Kirk," the collections of which, it is further said, "war not onlie of that quhilk was collectit in manner of almes, as sume suppose; but of other gudes, moveable and immoveable, of lands and possessions, the price quhair of was brocht to the feit of the Apostles." The next sentence is specially worthy of note. "This office continuit in the Deacons hands quha intronettit with the *haill gudes* of the Kirk, ay and whil (untill) the state thereof was corruptit be Antichrist, as the ancient canons beir witness."

This arrangement of the policie of the Church does not appear to have been carried out to the full even at the time (1581) when the "Second Book of Discipline" was finally in all its parts adopted by the Assembly and registered in its records. So we find that in Chapter XII, there were set down "Certain speciall Heids of Reformation" which the Assembly crave the aid of the Prince and parliament to effect. Amongst these the *fifteenth* pertains to the office of the Deacon and is as follows:—"We desire, thairfor Ecclesiasticall guids to be uplifted and distributed faithfully to whom they apertain, and that be the ministerie of the Deacones to the quilk office properlie the collection and distribution thair of belanges." In the *sixteenth* "Heid" it is further stated. "Giff these Deacones be elected with sic qualaties as God's Word craves to be in tham, ther is na feir that they sall abuse themselves in thair office, as the profane Collectors did of befor; yit because that this vocation appeires to manie to be dangerous, let tham be oblist, as they war of auld, to a yeirlye Compt to the Pastors and Eldarschipe." Such then are the functions assigned to the Deacons by the "Second Book of Discipline" on the authority of God's Word. That these views were universally held by our Fathers there is abundant testimony both in the "Acts" of Assemblies, and in the theological writings of the age. A curious evidence of this we find in certain "Articles quilk the Bischope of St. Androis gaiff out in England to the Frenche Kirke at Londone, sent to Genev, Tygurie, &c." In these articles he des-