

THE TRUE NATURE OF
A GOSPEL CHURCH AND ITS GOVERNMENT.¹

CHAPTER 6.

OF THE OFFICE OF TEACHERS

OR AN INQUIRY INTO THE STATE, CONDITION, AND WORK
OF THOSE CALLED TEACHERS IN THE SCRIPTURE.

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THE Lord Christ has given to his church “pastors and teachers,” Eph 4.11. He has “set in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers,” 1Cor 12.28. In the church at Antioch there were “prophets and teachers,” Act 13.1; and their work is both described and assigned to them, as we will see afterward.

But the thoughts of learned men about those who in the Scripture are called *teachers* are various; nor is the determination of their state and condition easy or obvious, as we will find in our inquiry.

If there were originally a distinct *office* of teachers in the church, it was lost for many ages. Yet there was always a shadow or appearance of it retained first in public catechists, and then in doctors or professors of theology in the schools that belonged to any church. But as for the title of *doctor* or *teacher*, this is but a late invention. For the occasion of it rose about the year 1135. Lotharius the emperor, having found in Italy a copy of the Roman civil law, and being greatly taken with it, he ordained that it should be publicly read and expounded in the schools. This he began by the direction of Imerius, his chancellor at Bononia. And to give encouragement to this employment, they ordained that those who were the public professors of it would be solemnly created *doctors*, of whom Bulgarus Hugolinus, with others, were the first. Not long after, this rite of creating doctors was borrowed from the lawyers, by divines who publicly taught divinity in their schools. And this imitation first took place in Bononia, Paris, and Oxford. But this name has since grown into a title of honor for various sorts of persons, whether to any good use or purpose or not, I don’t know. But it is in use and not worth contending about — especially if, as to some of them, it is fairly reconcilable with that saying of our Savior in Mat 23.8.²

But the custom of having teachers in the church who publicly explained and vindicated the principles of religion, is far more ancient and of known usage in the primitive churches. Such was the practice of the church of Alexandria in their school, in which the famous Pantaenus,³ Origen, and Clemens, were *teachers*. An imitation of this has been continued in all ages of the church.

And indeed, the continuation of such a peculiar work and employment, to be discharged in the manner of an office, is an evidence that originally there was such a distinct office in the church.

¹ *Works of John Owen*, , Vol. 16, ch. 9. 1850-53 edition, William Goold, ed.

² **Mat 23:8** "But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.

³ Pantaenus (d. 200) – a Greek theologian in the Catechetical School of Alexandria from around AD 180. This school was the earliest catechetical school, and became influential in the development of Christian theology.

For although in the Roman church they instituted a mixture of orders of sacred officers, borrowed from the Jews or Gentiles (which have no resemblance to anything mentioned in the Scripture), yet various things that were abused and corrupted by them in church-officers, took their occasional rise from what is so mentioned.

There are four opinions concerning those who are called by this name in the New Testament: —

1. Some say that no office at all is denoted by it. It is only a general appellation of those who taught others, whether constantly or occasionally. Such were the prophets in the church of Corinth who spoke occasionally and in their turns (1Cor 14). It is that which all might do who had the ability for it, verses 5, 24, 25.⁴

2. Some say it is only another name for the same office as pastor, and so it is not [intended] to denote any distinct office. Jerome seems to be of this mind, Ephesians 4.

3. Others allow that it was a distinct office, to which some were called and set apart in the church. It was only to teach (in a particular manner) the principles of religion, but had no interest in the rule of the church or the administration of the sacred mysteries. So the pastor in the church was to rule, and teach, and administer the sacred mysteries; the teacher to teach or instruct only, but not to rule or dispense the sacraments; and the ruling elder to rule only, and neither to teach nor administer sacraments — which has the appearance of order, both useful and beautiful.

4. Some judge that it was a *distinct office*, but of the same nature and kind as that of the pastor, endowed with all the same powers, but differenced from it with respect to gifts and a peculiar kind of work allotted to it. But this opinion has this seeming disadvantage: that the difference between them is so small as not to warrant a distinct denomination of *officer* or to constitute a distinct *office*. And it may be that such a distinction in gifts will seldom appear; so that the church may be guided by it in the choice of fit persons for distinct offices. But Scripture testimony and rule must take place, and I will briefly examine all these opinions.

The FIRST opinion is that this is *not the name of any officer; nor is a teacher as such, any officer in the church*. But it is used only as a general name for any who teach the doctrine of the gospel, on any account. Indeed, I don't know of any who have contended in particular for this opinion, but I observe that many expositors take no further notice of them than as such. This opinion seems to me to be most remote from the truth. It is true that in the first churches, not only *some*, but *all* who had received spiritual light in the gifts of knowledge and utterance, taught and instructed others as they had opportunity, 1Pet 4.10-11.⁵ Hence the heathen philosophers, such as Celsus in particular, objected to the Christians of old, that they allowed grocers, and weavers, and cobblers, to teach among them. But those who knew that Paul himself, their great apostle, worked at a trade not much

⁴ **1Cor 14:5** I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification. **1Co 14:24-25** But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. ²⁵ And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

⁵ **1Pet 4:10-11** As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ...

better, were not offended at this. The disciples were mentioned as this sort in Act 8.4; so was Aquila, Act 18.26; and the many prophets in the church of Corinth, 1Cor 14.29.⁶ But —

1. The name διδάσκαλος (*didaskalos*); is not used in the New Testament except for a teacher with *authority*. The apostle John tells us that διδάσκαλος is the same as ῥαζζουνί, (*razzouni*) 20.16,⁷ or as it is written in Mar 10.51,⁸ ῥαζζονί (*razzoni*),⁹ which in their mixed dialect was the same as *rabbi*. And רַבִּי רַבִּי, and רַבִּי were then in use for the Hebrew מוֹרֵה (*yarah*), which we find in Job 36.22 and Isa 30.20. Now, the constant signification of these words is “a master in teaching,” a “teacher with authority;” nor is διδάσκαλος (*didaskalos*) used in the New Testament except for such a one. And therefore, those who are called *teachers* were those who were set apart for the *office* of teaching, and not those who were so-called from an *occasional* work or duty.

2. Teachers are numbered among the officers Christ has given to and set in the church, Eph 4.11; 1Cor 12.8.¹⁰ So that it is beyond contradiction that originally, church-officers were intended by the term *teachers*.

3. They are mentioned as those who, with others, presided in the church, and joined in the public ministrations of it, Act 13.1-2.¹¹

4. They are charged to attend to the work of teaching, which none can do except those whose *office* is to teach, Rom 12.7.¹² It is therefore undeniable that there *is* such an office as that of a *teacher* mentioned in the Scripture.

The SECOND opinion is that, *although a teacher is a church-officer, yet no distinct office is intended in that denomination*. They say it is only another name for a *pastor*, the office being one and the same — the same persons being both pastors and teachers, or called by these several names, as they also have other titles ascribed to them.

So it has fallen out, and so it is usual in things of this nature, that men run into extremes — truth does not please them. In the first deviation of the church from its primitive institution, various offices were introduced to the church, that were not of divine institution. They were borrowed partly from the Jews and partly from the Gentiles; which issued in the *seven orders* of the church of Rome. They did not utterly reject any that were of a divine origin, but retained only some kind

⁶ **Acts 8:4** Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. **Act 18:26** So [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. **1Co 14:29** Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

⁷ **Joh 20:16** Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, *Teacher*).

⁸ **Mar 10:51** "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

⁹ So given in the textus receptus. Critical editions of the new Testament now give ῥαζζουνί — ED.

¹⁰ **Eph 4:11** And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers... **1Cor 12:28** And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

¹¹ **Act 13:1** Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

¹² **Rom 12:7** or ministry, *let us use it in our ministering*; he who teaches, in teaching;

of figure, shadow, or image of them. Then they brought in others that were merely of their own invention. In the rejection of this exorbitance, some are apt to run into the other extreme: they will deny and reject some of them that have a divine warranty for their origin, even though they are not many nor burdensome. Indeed, they are all such that, without their continuation, the edification of the church cannot be carried on in a due manner. For the beauty and order of the church in its rule and worship, it is required not only that there be *many* officers in each church, but also that they be of various *sorts* — all harmony in natural, political, and ecclesiastical things arising from variety with proportion. And whoever considers with calmness and without prejudice, the whole work that is to be done in churches, with the purpose of their institution, he will be able to understand the necessity of pastors, teachers, ruling elders, and deacons, for those ends and no other.

And thus I hope I will demonstrate in the consideration of these respective offices, *the duties that belong to them*. Therefore, as to the opinion under present consideration, I say, —

1. In the primitive church, about the end of the 2nd century — before there was the least attempt to introduce new officers into the church — there were persons called to the office and work of *public teaching*, who were not pastors, nor called to the administration of other ordinances. Those of this sort in the church of Alexandria, because of their extraordinary abilities, quickly gained great fame and renown. Their constant work was to publicly explain and teach the principles of Christian religion to all comers, both believers and unbelievers, defending and vindicating it from the opposition of its heathen adversaries, whether atheists or philosophers.¹³ This would never have been so precisely practiced in the church if it had not derived from divine institution. And of this sort is “the catechist,” ὁ κατηχῶν (*o katechoon*), intended by the apostle in Gal 6.6.¹⁴ For it is one who constantly labors in the work of preaching, and who has those who depend on his ministry — those who are taught or *catechised* by him, οἱ κατηχούμενοι (*katechoumenoi*). For it is from this alone that maintenance (*remuneration*) is due to him for his work: “Let the catechised communicate to the catechist,” the taught to the teacher, “in all good things.” And it is not the *pastor* of the church that he intends; for he speaks of him in the same case in another manner, and nowhere is it with respect to teaching alone.

2. There is a plain distinction between the *offices* of a pastor and a teacher: Eph 4.11, “Some pastors **and** teachers.” This is one of the instances in which men test their wits in putting in exceptions to plain Scripture testimonies, as some do in all other cases. If this is allowed, we will have nothing certain left to us in the whole book of God. The apostle enumerates distinctly all the teaching officers of the church, both extraordinary and ordinary. “It is granted that there is a difference between apostles, prophets, and evangelists; but there is none,” say some, “between pastors and teachers,” which are also named distinctly. Why so? “Because there is an interposition of the article τούς (*tous*) between those of the former sort, and not between ‘pastors and teachers.’” This is a very weak consideration to control the evidence of the design of the apostle in the words. We are not to prescribe to him how he expresses himself. But this I know, that the discretive and copulative

¹³ These were *apologists*, as in Act 19.33 and 1Pet 3.15: “give a defense,” Gr. *apologia*. These exhortations are given to all, and not only to officers of the church. It’s not exclusive: Tit 1.9, a bishop “must hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.” – WHG

¹⁴ **Gal 6:6** Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

conjunction καί (*kai*) “and,” between “pastors” and “teachers,” no less distinguishes one from the other, than the τοῦς (*tous*) and τοῦς δέ (*tous de*) made use of before that.¹⁵ And this I will confirm from the words themselves: —

(1.) The apostle does not say “pastors *or* teachers,” which in congruity of speech should have been done if the same persons and the same office were intended; and the disjunctive particle at the close of such an enumeration of things, as distinct as that used in this place, is of the same force as the other notes of distinction used before it.

(2.) After he has named *pastors* he names *teachers*, with a note of distinction. This must either contain the addition of a new office, or be an interpretation of what went before, as if he had said, “Pastors, *that is*, teachers.” If it is the latter, then the term *teachers* must be added as that which was better known than that of *pastors*, and more expressive of the office intended (it is declared who are meant by pastors in calling them teachers). Otherwise the addition of the word is merely superfluous. But this is quite otherwise, the term *pastor* being more known as to the indication of office power and care, and more appropriated to *this* office than that of *teacher*, which is both a common name (not absolutely appropriated to an office), and also respective of only one part of the pastoral office and duty.

(3.) No instance can be given in any place, where there is an *enumeration of church-officers*, either by their names (as in 1Cor 12.28), or by their work (as in Rom 12.6-8), or by the offices themselves (as in Phi 1.1), of the same officer, at the same time, being expressed under various names. Doing so must indeed introduce confusion into such an enumeration. It is true, the same officers are called in the Scriptures by several names — such as pastors, bishops, presbyters. But if it had been said *anywhere* that in the church there were bishops *and* presbyters, then it must be acknowledged that they were distinct *officers*, such as bishops and deacons are (Phi 1.1).

(4.) The words in their first notion are *not synonymous*; for all pastors are teachers, but not all teachers are pastors: and therefore the latter cannot be exegetical of the former.

3. As these teachers are so called and named in contra-distinction to pastors in the same place, so they have *distinct office-works* and *duties* assigned to them in the same place also. Rom 12.7-8: “He that teaches, use it on teaching; he that exhorts, use it on exhortation.” If they have especial works to distinctly attend to by virtue of their offices, then their offices are distinct also; for from one there is an especial obligation to one sort of duties, and another sort from the other office.

4. These teachers are set in the church as a *distinct office* from that of prophets: “secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers,” 1Cor 12.28. And so they are mentioned distinctly in the church of Antioch. Act 13.1: “There were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers.” But in both places, pastors are comprised under the name *prophets*, exhortation being a special branch of prophesy (Rom 12.6-8).

¹⁵ Gr. — “and he himself gave some as apostles [*tous men apostolous* — *indeed the apostles*], some to be prophets [*tous de prophetas* — *and the prophets*], and some as evangelists [*tous de euaggelistas* — *and the evangelists*], and some to be pastors and teachers [*tous de poimenas kai didaskalous* — *and (de) the pastors and (kai) teachers*]. Owen says in effect, there should be a comma inserted: “and the pastors, and [also] teachers.” This is indicated by the change in the connector from “*de*” to “*kai*,” seeing that both can be translated “and.” Why else the change? — WHG

5. There is a peculiar *institution of maintenance* (remuneration) for these teachers, which argues for a distinct office, Gal 6.6.

From all these considerations, it appears that the teachers mentioned in the Scripture, were officers in the church *distinct* from pastors: for they are distinguished from them, —

- (1.) By their *name*, declarative of the special nature of their office;
- (2.) By their *peculiar work* which they are to attend to, in teaching by virtue of office;
- (3.) By their *distinct placing* in the church as peculiar officers in it, distinct from prophets or pastors;
- (4.) By the *special constitution* of their necessary maintenance;
- (5.) By the *necessity of their work*, to be distinctly carried on in the church.

This may suffice for the removal of the second opinion.

The THIRD is, that teachers *are a distinct office* in the church, but their office, work, and power, are confined to *teaching only* — such that they have no interest in rule or the administration of the sacraments. And, —

1. I acknowledge that this seems to have been the way and practice of the churches after the apostles. For they ordinarily had catechists and teachers in assemblies, like *schools*, who were not called to the whole work of the ministry.

2. The name *teacher* — in its native signification, or in its ordinary application as expressing the work of this office — does not extend itself beyond or signify anything but the mere power and duty of teaching. It is otherwise as to the names *pastor*, *bishop* (or overseer), and *elder*. As to the two former, their constant use in the Scripture, suited to their signification, includes the whole work of the ministry; and the latter (elder) is a name of dignity and *rule*. Upon proposing to have church *officers* under these names, the whole of *office power and duty* is apprehended as included in them. But the name *teacher*, especially considering the signification of *rabbi* among the Jews, carries with it a confinement to an especial work or duty.

3. I judge it lawful for any church, from the nature of the thing itself, from Scripture, and from general rules and directions, to choose, call, and set apart, fit persons to the office, work, and duty of teachers, without any interest in the *rule* of the church, or the *administration* of the holy ordinances of worship. The same thing is practiced by many as to the substance of it (though not in due order); and it may be that the practice of it, duly observed, would lead us back to the original institution of this office. But, —

4. Whereas a teacher, merely as such, has no right to rule or to administer ordinances — no more than the doctors among the Jews had a right to offer sacrifices in the temple. Yet the one who is called to be a *teacher* may also be called to be an *elder* at the same time; and as such, a teaching-elder has the power of all holy administrations committed to him.

5. But someone who is called to be a teacher in a peculiar manner, even though he is an elder also, is to attend peculiarly to that part of his work from which he receives his denomination.

So at present I defer this third opinion for further consideration, if there is any occasion for it.

The FOURTH opinion I embrace (rather than any of the others) is namely on the supposition that a teacher is a *distinct officer* in the church. And his office is *of the same kind* as that of the pastor, though distinguished from it as to degrees, both materially and formally; for, —

1. They are joined with pastors in the same order as their associates in office, Eph 4.11. So they are joined with prophets, and set in the church as they are, 1Cor 12.28; Acts 13.1.¹⁶
2. They have a peculiar work assigned to them, which is of the same general nature as that of pastors (Rom 12:7). And because teaching or preaching the gospel is by virtue of an office, they have the same office as the pastors (as to its substance).
3. They are said to minister in the church, λειτουργῆσαι (*leitourgesai*), Act 13.1-2,¹⁷ which comprises all sacred administrations. This is why, upon the consideration of all that is said in the Scripture concerning church-teachers, with the various conjectures of all sorts of writers about them, I will conclude my own thoughts in a few observations. And then I will inquire into the state of the church with reference to these “pastors and teachers.”

And I say, —

1. There *may be teachers* in a church called only to the work of teaching, without any further interest in rule or right to the administration of the sacraments. They seem to be those mentioned in Gal 6.6, where they are particularly called κατηχοῦντες “catechists;” and παιδαγωγοί, (*pedagogy*) “instructors of those who are young” in the rudiments of religion, 1Cor 4.15.¹⁸ And there were such in the primitive churches; some of them were eminent, famous, and useful. And this was very necessary in those days when the churches were great and numerous. For the whole rule of the church, and the administration of all ordinances in it, are originally committed to the *pastor*, as belonging entirely to his office. The discharge of that office in all its parts, for the edification of the church — especially when a church is numerous — is impossible for any one man; and it may be impossible for more in the same office, where all are obliged to specially attend to one part of it, namely, *the word and prayer*. And so it pleased the Lord Christ to appoint those who, in distinct offices, would be associated with them for the discharge of various parts of their duty. So *deacons* were ordained to take care of the poor and the outward concerns of the church, without any interest in rule or the right to teach. So elders were (as we will prove) ordained to assist and help in *rule*, without any call to preach,¹⁹ or administer the sacraments. And so teachers were appointed to instruct the church and others in the truth, who had no right to rule or to the administration of other ordinances. And thus, although the whole duty of the edification of the

¹⁶ **1Cor 12:28** And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. **Act 13:1** Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain *prophets and teachers*: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

¹⁷ **Acts 13:1** Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain *prophets and teachers*... “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” [The word *leitourgeo* means to serve the state at no cost; it also means to provide a service or do a work. – WHG]

¹⁸ **1Cor 4:15** For though you might have ten thousand instructors (*pedagogy*) in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

¹⁹ Though they must still be “apt to teach,” and therefore may occasionally preach. – WHG

church is still incumbent on the *pastors*, yet being supplied with assistance to all the parts of it, it may be comfortably discharged by them. And if this order were observed in all churches, not only would many inconveniencies be prevented, but the order and edification of the church would be greatly promoted.

2. Someone who is *peculiarly called to be a teacher*, with reference to a distinction from a pastor, may yet at the same time be called to *be an elder also*; that is, to be a *teaching elder*. And where there is in any officer, a concurrence of both these — *i.e.*, a right to rule as an elder, and the power to teach or preach the gospel — there is the same *office*, and same *office-power* (for the substance of it) as there is in the pastor.

3. On the foregoing supposition, there yet remains *a distinction between the office of a pastor and that of a teacher* — which, as far as light may be taken from their names and distinct ascriptions to them, consists materially in the different *gifts* which those who are called to the office have received, which the church in their call ought to regard. And it consists formally in the peculiar exercise of those gifts in the discharge of their office, according to the assignation of their special work to them, which they themselves are to attend to.

Based on what has been said before concerning the office of pastors and teachers, it may be inquired whether there may be many of them in a particular church, or whether there should only be of one of each sort? And I say, —

1. Take teachers in the *third sense* — those who are *only* teachers and have no further interest in office-power — and there is no doubt that there may be and ought to be as many of them in any church as are necessary for its edification. And a due observation of this institution would prevent the inconvenience of men's preaching constantly who are in *no office* of the church. For I grant that those who have once been regularly and solemnly set apart or ordained to the ministry, have the right of constant preaching *inherent* in them, and the duty of it *incumbent* on them, though they may be separated from those churches in which, and to whom, they were particularly ordained. Yet for men to give themselves up constantly to the work of teaching by preaching the gospel, who were never set apart to it by the church, I don't know that it can be justified.²⁰

2. If there is but one *sort* of elder mentioned in the Scripture, it is beyond all question that there may be many *pastors* in the same church. For there were many elders in every church, Act 14.23, 20.17, 28; Phi 1.1; Tit 1.5. But if there are various sorts of elders mentioned in the Scripture — such as pastors who particularly feed the flock, those *teaching elders* of whom we have spoken, and those *rulers* concerning whom we will treat in the next place — then no determination of this inquiry can be taken merely from the multiplicity of them in any church.

3. It is certain that the order very early observed in the church was to have *one* pastor, "*the president*," ὁ προεστώς (*o proestoos*)²¹ — quickly called "episcopus," by way of distinction — with *many elders* assisting in rule and teaching, and *deacons* ministering in the things of this life, by which the order of the church was preserved, and its authority represented. Yet I will not deny

²⁰ That is, a pastor or teacher must first pastor and teach in a particular church, and only then "at large." – WHG

²¹ Pro 26.17 LXX, "makes himself a judge (ruler) over strangers," (a sarcastic use of the word). – WHG

that in each particular church there may be many pastors with an equality of power, if the edification of the church requires it.

4. It was the alteration of the state of the church from its primitive constitution, and the deviation from its first order by an occasional coalescence of many churches into one, by a new form of churches never appointed by Christ (which didn't come in until after the end of the 2nd century) that gave occasion to corrupt this order into episcopal *preeminence*; and this degenerated more and more into confusion under the name of *order*.²² And the absolute equality of many pastors in one and the same church is also liable to many inconveniences, if not diligently watched against.

5. Therefore, let the state of the church be preserved and kept to its original constitution, which is *congregational*, and no other. And I judge that the order of the officers which existed so early in the primitive church — namely, of one pastor or bishop in one church, assisted in rule and all holy administrations, with many elders teaching or ruling only — does not so overthrow church order as to render its rule or discipline useless.

6. In the Scripture, there is no difference intimated between bishops and presbyters as to office or power, as we have proved. When there are many teaching elders in any church, an equality in office and power is to be preserved. Yet this does not diminish the due preference of the pastoral office, nor the necessity of precedence for the observation of order in all church assemblies, nor the consideration of the peculiar advantages that the gifts, age, abilities, prudence, and experience which may belong to some, *according to rule*, may give.

²² As churches gathered together within a city or region, administrators were added in the form of a political hierarchy, ostensibly to organize its activities, validate its ordinations, preserve its sacraments, and protect its teachings. - WHG